CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDREDTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 28 March 2002, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Markku Reimaa (Finland)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 900th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I would like warmly to welcome our two distinguished speakers today, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Abdul Sattar, and the Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, His Excellency Mr. Javad Zarif, who will address the Conference. Their presence among us today demonstrates the enduring commitment of their Governments to our common endeavours and the continued importance that they attach to the Conference on Disarmament. I am convinced that their addresses will be followed by us all with great interest.

Allow me also to welcome to our meeting a group of Japanese diplomats dealing with disarmament issues, who have gathered in Geneva from a number of embassies and missions abroad in order to familiarize themselves with various aspects of arms control and disarmament, as well as with the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have also on my list for today the following speakers in addition to the eminent representatives that I have already mentioned: Ambassador Leonid Skotnikov of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Hu Xiaodi of China, Ambassador Les Luck of Australia, and Ambassador Seiichiro Noboru of Japan.

I have the pleasure to give the floor now to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Abdul Sattar.

Mr. SATTAR (Pakistan): Your Excellencies, Mr. President, distinguished members of the Conference, I start with an apology regarding my sound box - but I am sure that those who will be listening to me through interpreters will gain a much better idea of what I am saying than those who are following me in English, because of my throat.

It is a distinct honour for me to address the Conference on Disarmament for the first tim[illegible] in my present position and to share with you Pakistan's perspectives on global and regional security issues.

Pakistan is confident that, under you, Mr. President, the Conference on Disarmament will make significant strides towards fulfilling its important role. Given our commitment to disarmament objectives, and the excellent relations between Pakistan and Finland, you can count on Pakistan's full support and cooperation in your endeavours.

I also congratulate Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze on his appointment as the Secretary-General of the Conference. His vast diplomatic experience will be a great asset in facilitating the work of this forum.

(Mr. Sattar, Pakistan)

The global security environment has been transformed over the last year. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 threw into bold relief the new dimensions of international insecurity and instability. They demonstrated that threats to security can emanate from diverse sources, internal and external; that even the most powerful States are vulnerable; and that the causes of such threats are complex, as are their consequences.

The magnitude of the tragedy galvanized the world community to intensify cooperation in order to strengthen peace and security. It brought together an international coalition to fight terrorism. It has created the possibility of finally bringing peace and reconstruction to Afghanistan. The world community is now engaged in a more earnest analysis of the root causes of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Recognition of the problem of poverty has been enhanced, as also has realization of the need to address and resolve conflicts and disputes.

It is thus a defining moment in history. Right decisions can make a decisive difference. We could succeed in bringing about a structure of comprehensive and durable peace and security. We could effectively address and resolve long-festering conflicts and disputes. We should address the security concerns of all States, large and small. We could restrain the desire to acquire weapons of mass destruction. We could restrict the supply and proliferation of such weapons. And we could avoid policy decisions and actions that may revive a global arms race.

We have to note, nevertheless, that some recent developments have damaged the prospects of global disarmament. The impending demise of the ABM Treaty and plans for the development of strategic and theatre ballistic missile defence systems could erode stability at the global and regional levels. The prospects for the entry into force of the CTBT have become bleaker. Renewed nuclear testing and the development of so-called "usable" nuclear weapons could trigger a new nuclear arms race. The prospects of finalizing the BWC protocol also do not look bright in the wake of the breakdown of negotiations last December. And this Conference remains deadlocked on its work programme, pending negotiations on a fissile materials treaty, on nuclear disarmament and on steps to prevent an arms race in outer space.

These negative trends for strategic stability and disarmament could become much worse if existing policies designed to prevent the use of nuclear weapons are abandoned in favour of arbitrary and unidimensional approaches to security. Serious concerns have been provoked by the recent revelations of analyses and projections which, if translated into policies, would erode some of the fundamental premises of bilateral, regional and global disarmament and non-proliferation paradigms.

Although the powerful may be driven by unilateral impulses, they cannot escape multilateral imperatives. The world has changed radically over the last decade since the cold war. New power configurations are accompanied by new technologies and new security threats. Major Powers, although perhaps more unequal now in military capabilities, still possess the capability to inflict unacceptable damage and destruction on one another.

(Mr. Sattar, Pakistan)

In any new paradigm of cooperative international security, the promotion of arms control and disarmament at the global and regional levels will continue to play a central role. An agreed and equitable political and legal framework is essential to ensure strategic stability in future. The United Nations remains the best instrument for the formulation and implementation of such a framework. And this Conference is the best instrument to promote the vitally necessary multilateral agreements for global and regional disarmament.

Pakistan is committed to negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material treaty, which should be both a non-proliferation and disarmament treaty. The Conference on Disarmament should also open negotiations in ad hoc committees on nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Until agreement on the work programme is achieved, the Conference on Disarmament should be utilized to address certain other areas of importance for international security and disarmament, such as the issue of missiles in all its aspects and regional arms control.

In the emerging international security environment, missiles will clearly constitute a central element in the varying equations of offensive and defensive capabilities. With the demise of the ABM Treaty, some major Powers may rely on as yet uncertain ballistic missile defences while others may multiply their offensive systems to maintain the credibility of their deterrence. Missiles will also emerge as an important element of deterrence equations, particularly if advanced aircraft are either not available or are too expensive.

Partial approaches to containing the proliferation of missiles, as represented by the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), discriminate against some countries, eroding their national security and working to the advantage of others which already possess missile capabilities and other delivery platforms.

It is essential, therefore, to address the missiles issue in a comprehensive, non-discriminatory and balanced manner, covering both non-proliferation and disarmament aspects. That would not exclude interim measures to address specific and urgent issues which may threaten regional and international peace and stability on the basis of mutual and equitable restraint.

The Conference on Disarmament is the most appropriate forum to address this complex issue. It has the mandate and the expertise to analyse the implications and negotiate a legally binding instrument. Only such an instrument emerging from the Conference on Disarmament can expect to enjoy universal acceptance. Accordingly, Pakistan has proposed that the Conference should consider the issue of missiles. We are encouraged by the generally positive responses to our proposal which we hope will lead to an early consensus on an adequate course of action.

(Mr. Sattar, Pakistan)

The United Nations General Assembly annually adopts resolutions endorsing the pursuit of regional disarmament as a complement to international disarmament endeavours. The General Assembly has also called on the Conference on Disarmament to evolve principles for the realization of conventional arms control and disarmament at the regional and subregional levels.

The international community cannot ignore the reality that principal threats to international peace and security now emanate not from any continuing strategic confrontation between the major Powers but from regional conflicts and tensions. It is the compulsions generated by these situations that now motivate the continued build-up of conventional forces and weapons of mass destruction capabilities.

The best way to prevent the scourge of war is to follow the vision of the United Nations Charter. International disputes should be resolved peacefully and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law. Special attention should focus on the probable flashpoints of conflict and confrontation - the Taiwan Straits, the Korean peninsula, the Middle East and South Asia.

Pakistan and India now possess destructive power that is awesome. Inherent in military conflict is the danger of escalation to the nuclear level. This is not a threat, but a statement of fact. A no-first-use proposal limited only to nuclear weapons may, in fact, enhance the temptation to use conventional force for aggression and erode the deterrence that obtains at present. The option to use force needs to be abandoned. Pakistan is ready to join India in a reciprocal binding commitment to renounce the use of force, both conventional and nuclear.

South Asia has been described as the most dangerous place in the world. This is an apt assessment, especially at this moment. India has deployed its massive forces, including ballistic missiles, in battle positions along our international border and the Line of Control in Kashmir. Resorting to the threat of use of force, India has made unilateral demands on Pakistan. Irresponsible statements have been made by political military spokesmen contemplating what they have termed a "limited war" against Pakistan.

While crude attempts at coercive diplomacy are obviously inadmissible - and Pakistan will protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity against any aggression or incursion - our Government has made reasonable proposals for dialogue on issues of mutual concern. We believe that progress can be made if, instead of making one-sided demands, India enters into a dialogue with Pakistan. Similarly, instead of making diversionary allegations about violations of the Line of Control, India should permit impartial monitoring and stop obstructing the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) from carrying out its mandate in Kashmir.

(Mr. Sattar, Pakistan)

Everyone knows that a serious approach to defusing tension and normalizing relations between Pakistan and India requires a just settlement of the Kashmir question. The principle and the prescription for a peaceful settlement have been sanctified in resolutions of the Security Council. India has an obligation to carry out the resolutions and implement its own pledge to let the people of the State exercise their right of self-determination.

As a first step, it is essential for New Delhi to recognize that no possible benefit of its current brinkmanship can match the disastrous consequences of an apocalyptical war with Pakistan. Our President, Pervez Musharraf, has offered his hand of friendship to Prime Minister Vajpayee in Kathmandu and urged a return to the process of dialogue on which the two leaders had reached an understanding at Agra. Settlement of Jammu and Kashmir would pave the way for the normalization of relations between the two neighbours. The dialogue would encompass security and nuclear issues, terrorism and narcotics trafficking, as well as proposals for cooperation in economic, commercial and other fields.

Apart from its resort to repression and terror against the Kashmiri freedom movement, India's reckless build-up of conventional and strategic weapons betrays hegemonic aims. Over the past three years India has increased its military spending by 50 per cent. Ironically, many of those States which plead here for non-proliferation and disarmament are selling advanced weapons systems to India. A responsible approach should require these States to counsel and exercise restraint, rather than contribute to India's destabilizing arms build-up.

Pakistan does not want to be sucked into a debilitating arms race in South Asia. In fact, we have frozen our budget since 1999. Pakistan will, however, need to maintain the credibility of its deterrence posture. The growing imbalance in conventional military capability would have wider strategic implications. It could aggravate Pakistan's reliance on the nuclear dimensions of its deterrence posture. It could lower the nuclear threshold in a regional security environment that is already inflammable.

The situation demands determined efforts by influential States to prevent emergent instability and a possibly disastrous conflict.

In addition to urgent de-escalation to defuse the current tensions, the incipient trends toward insecurity and instability in South Asia need to be constrained on a durable basis. This can be achieved by constructing a new architecture for peace, arms control and cooperation in the region.

Based on the fundamental principles which have been approved by the United Nations, especially the principle of equal security for all States, Pakistan has proposed the creation of a strategic restraint regime in South Asia. Incorporating nuclear as well as conventional arms balance and a political mechanism for resolving bilateral conflicts, especially the core dispute over Jammu and Kashmir, the comprehensive proposal includes the following components:

(Mr. Sattar, Pakistan)

- Bilateral formalization of the declared moratoriums on further nuclear testing by India and Pakistan;

- Non-deployment of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles;

- Maintenance of nuclear weapons on de-alert status;

- Formalization of the understanding to provide prior adequate notification of flight tests of missiles;

- Acceptance of a moratorium on the acquisition and deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems;

- Confidence-building measures to reduce the risk of use of nuclear weapons by miscalculation or accident;

- Discussion of respective nuclear security doctrines with a view to avoiding a regional nuclear arms race.

Pakistan remains prepared to explore these proposals in bilateral talks with India, or through the mediation of the United Nations or other major Powers. We are also ready to discuss the regional restraint measures within the Conference on Disarmament.

In the pursuit of effective security in our difficult regional environment, Pakistan has adopted responsible policies. We seek credible deterrence but at the lowest possible level. We have upgraded command and control structures and devised iron-clad measures and mechanisms to ensure the security of our nuclear assets and capabilities. A national command authority, chaired by the head of Government and including three federal ministers and chiefs of armed services, provides policy direction, oversees recommendations in regard to the deployment and employment of assets, and approves measures to ensure custodial safety and complete institutional control.

Finally, let me add that Pakistan has developed limited nuclear capabilities exclusively for self-defence. Pakistan remains committed to the principle of non-proliferation. We agree that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction will be destabilizing for global, regional and national security. To that end, Pakistan has tightened its already effective export-control system and is prepared further to strengthen laws to provide assurances against proliferation.

At the global as well as regional levels, the quest for non-proliferation will be unsustainable unless it is accompanied by a matching commitment to the goal of disarmament, nuclear and conventional. It is this commitment which is in question today. This Conference has an indispensable role in reviving the commitment to disarmament and ensuring that it is universally embraced.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair and to my country, and I now request your indulgence for a few moments while I escort our distinguished guest from the hall. I give the floor now to the Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, His Excellency Mr. Javad Zarif.

Mr. ZARIF (Islamic Republic of Iran): In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful:

Mr. President, it is a great pleasure for me to be back at the Conference on Disarmament, to which my Government attaches great importance.

Let me, at the outset, congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and wish you success in guiding the admittedly difficult task before us. My delegation has full confidence in your leadership and foresight and is sure that you will make every possible effort to steer the Conference back on track and restore to it the relevance and importance which it once, not too long ago, enjoyed. I assure you of our support and cooperation.

I also wish to extend my warmest felicitations to my good friend, Sergei Ordzhonikidze, on his appointment and wish him every success.

In the last few years we have witnessed drastic developments on the international scene, not necessarily all promising, in the field of international security and disarmament. The challenges have been formidable. Yet our resolve to face them has been less than desirable or truly collective.

The end of the cold war gave rise to hopes for a world free from super-Power rivalries, a world where confrontation would no longer be the order of the day and cooperation would prevail and a world where all States, through active participation in multilateral processes addressing the problems facing the prosperity and well-being of all nations, would devise rule-based regimes governing international relations in all spheres.

And we did in fact make undeniable progress in the field of disarmament. This Conference can take credit for much of that. In the early 1990s we succeeded in finalizing the Chemical Weapons Convention and establishing OPCW to organize international cooperation in our common cause against a horrible category of weapons of mass destruction.

In 1994, the BWC Special Conference mandated an open-ended ad hoc group to start negotiations on a protocol strengthening the implementation of the Convention, again, so that the world can feel more calm and safe from the scourge of another category of weapons of mass destruction.

(Mr. Zarif, Islamic Republic of Iran)

In the 1990s, the Conference on Disarmament also engaged in negotiations for a comprehensive ban on all nuclear tests, as a first step toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Although the Conference on Disarmament could not agree on a final document, the CTBT, notwithstanding certain deficiencies and loopholes, was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1996.

In early 1995, the nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed their pledge not to resort to the threat or use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. This pledge was noted by the Security Council in its resolution 984 (1995). A couple of weeks later, the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, taking note, inter alia, of this pledge, indefinitely extended the Treaty.

The 2000 NPT Review Conference was yet another success. The States parties to the Treaty were able, for the first time in fifteen years, to agree on a final document in which unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, the applicability of the principle of irreversibility to nuclear disarmament and the diminishing role of nuclear weapons in security posture were reaffirmed.

Not all went as well as hoped, however.

Following the end of negotiations on the CTBT, the Conference on Disarmament has failed to agree on a substantive programme of work. This is in fact the fifth consecutive year that we gather in this august body to discuss what to discuss, without any success.

The rejection of the CTBT by a major nuclear-weapon State has blown hopes for its rapid entry into force and there does not seem to be any room for optimism towards a change of policy from that side.

The results of more than six years of negotiations in the Ad Hoc Group on a protocol strengthening the implementation of the BWC have been vetoed and the validity of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group has been questioned. Furthermore, the BWC Fifth Review Conference has been suspended because of recourse to a unilateral approach to issues of concern to all members of the international community.

The unilateral withdrawal from the ABM Treaty coupled with the pursuit of gigantic military projects like the national missile defence system, have exacerbated international concerns about a more dangerous arms race and the militarization of outer space.

But that is still not all.

The publication of excerpts from a new would-be nuclear weapons doctrine has alarmed nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. While the document remains classified, official statements do not deny that action plans are being devised to develop a new generation of nuclear weapons and to improve the existing ones to be used against nuclear as well as non-nuclear-weapon States.

(Mr. Zarif, Islamic Republic of Iran)

The so-called "nuclear posture review" represents an alarming trend of contempt for multilateralism and threatens to undermine our common achievements, particularly in the area of non-proliferation.

We cannot seek, as I said in this Conference two years ago, to establish a civilized community of human beings and States without accepting the premise that all peoples and States have an equal right to survive and to guarantee peace and security for their citizens. Mass destructive weapons, by their very existence, undermine this basic principle as well as the most fundamental human rights and the very foundations of international humanitarian law. We should not accept that our children in the coming millennium should continue to live under the horrifying shadow of the possible use of these weapons. We must ensure that the peoples of Iran and Japan are the very last victims of weapons of mass destruction of any type at any time and under any pretext whatsoever.

At present, we feel that this very basic premise of the civilized world is under the attack of the "offensive strike leg" of the new nuclear posture.

As for Iran, let me underline once again and in no equivocal terms that we consider the development and use of weapons of mass destruction inhuman, immoral, illegal and against our very basic principles. They have no place in our defence doctrine. We do not have, nor do we seek, any such weapons, and most certainly we do not accept or tolerate allegations by those who have clearly placed themselves and their protégé outside the law.

Under the current volatile situation, where unacceptable unilateral approaches are even glorified, the United Nations disarmament machinery, and this Conference in particular, have a crucial role to play. This can be done, as suggested by the Group of 21, with an agenda of negotiations on nuclear disarmament, FMCT, PAROS and negative security assurances.

On nuclear weapons, the NPT and its review conferences provide us with sufficient input. Here the concern is more with compliance.

The emergence of the new nuclear weapons doctrine and its implications, constitute serious violations of the provisions of the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, on a moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions, the principle of irreversibility and the diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies.

Such a doctrine would also constitute a grave violation of the positive and negative security assurances given by nuclear-weapon States in the early 1980s and reaffirmed in 1995, including in a Security Council resolution.

We believe that the lack of compliance with the commitments undertaken in accordance with NPT provisions and agreed upon during the NPT review conferences and those unilaterally pledged and reaffirmed would make the option for a treaty on negative security assurances a

(Mr. Zarif, Islamic Republic of Iran)

viable one. The wealth of exploratory discussions within the Conference on Disarmament on this issue provides the necessary basis for strengthening the NPT regime through an international legally-binding instrument assuring non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

With regard to biological weapons, the results of more than a decade of arduous negotiations within the VEREX group of experts and the Ad Hoc Group are too valuable to be neglected and set aside, just because of a single player, however powerful. We believe that the only effective international mechanism to strengthen the BWC and combat new challenges, including bio-terrorism, is the finalization of the protocol through the completion of the work of the twenty-fourth session of the Ad Hoc Group.

Strict adherence to the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group, as issued by the 1994 BWC Special Conference, would both ensure the total and effective ban of another category of weapons of mass destruction and leave no ground for baseless allegations of non-compliance which lack any verifiable justification.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is perhaps the only instrument dealing with weapons of mass destruction in which all necessary verification measures have been foreseen. Notwithstanding certain deficiencies concerning universal adherence to the Convention, OPCW has been successful in carrying out its task and continued full cooperation of all States parties is the prerequisite for its further success.

It is quite natural for all members of any international organization, including OPCW, to be concerned with the management of all aspects of the work of the organization, including financial management and allocation of resources. Such concerns should, however, be addressed through the appropriate mechanisms that have been envisaged, and not through arm-twisting or financially strangling the only legitimate mechanism for verification of compliance with the Convention.

With regard to missiles, the complexities associated with the issue of missiles are so enormous that no unilateral, self-serving approach could provide for a universal response which takes into account the interests and concerns of all. The results of the work of the panel of governmental experts and the report to be submitted to the General Assembly would provide us with a road map to deal with the issue. We therefore believe that every support should be rendered, through active participation in a truly deliberative process within the panel, in order to enable this first step - conducive to broad-based conclusions - to be adopted in the framework of the United Nations.

It is necessary to keep the issue of missiles, in all its aspects and addressed in a comprehensive, non-discriminatory and balanced manner, within the United Nations disarmament machinery, which provides the sole multilateral forum to address arms control and disarmament issues.

(Mr. Zarif, Islamic Republic of Iran)

While the international community calls for multilateralism, cooperation and dialogue, one single voice talks about the escalation of war and unilateralism. The international community is poised at a defining moment. We need to decide about our individual and collective approaches. We had thought and hoped that all players had gained the maturity to understand that self-centred policies that are "quite simply pro" this or that country are indeed quite simply outdated. We need to build policies that are pro-humanity. It is not that simple, and admittedly not that popular with some powerful domestic constituencies, but it is most certainly the only way.

Three years ago, I stated before this august body:

> "As we enter a new millennium, we need to adopt a new perspective. We need to revisit old strategies and doctrines, which were founded on theoretically weak and historically unsound constructs. The challenge of the twenty-first century [...] is the mentality that believes any country whatsoever still needs nuclear weapons or can justify having them or claim that they are safe in their arsenal.
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> "Doctrines and policies of an arms race, block formations and exclusions have not brought our global community any real sense of security or peace. We need to rethink these very policies and reassess our fundamental assumptions, and I regret that this has yet to happen. Before a new round of rivalry and exclusion is entrenched, perpetuated and sanctified through the theories of clash and conflict between nations and civilizations, the international community must adopt the strategy of dialogue, tolerance and inclusion. The Conference on Disarmament's mission for the twenty-first century must centre on active pursuit of this imperative, breaking away from outdated perspectives, and beginning to look seriously at new paradigms such as global security networking."

Today, I can repeat the same statement with even more vigour and commitment. The tragic events of 11 September proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that we all have one fundamental commonality: our common vulnerability. The horror of that day illustrated that no country, however powerful, can be immune from the menaces that threaten the rest of the international community. It showed that global problems ranging from the environment to terrorism and weapons of mass destruction require global and not unilateral responses. Failure to grasp this reality would lead to simplistic and domestically appealing statements of policy such as some that have been made in this hall.

Let us have no doubt that, sooner or later, we will all come to the conclusion that we require a new global security paradigm founded on the principle that security is global and indivisible. We will save ourselves and all humankind a great deal of energy and agony by coming to terms, sooner rather than later, with the real need for inclusive, multilateral and rule-based security for all. For that we need to expand our horizons. We need to go beyond national self-interest to global common interest. The Conference on Disarmament has a crucial role to play in this endeavour and has the capacity to do so and thus lead.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement. I now give the floor to the next speaker on my list, the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Skotnikov.

Mr. SKOTNIKOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): First of all, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the Conference on Disarmament and to wish you every success. You may count on our support. It is also a great pleasure for me to congratulate Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze on his appointment as the Secretary-General of our Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General.

The first part of the 2002 session of the Conference on Disarmament is coming to an end. As we look back, we can note some small movement in our work: the renewal of the mandate of the special coordinators on expansion of the membership of the Conference; on its approved and effective functioning; and on the review of its agenda. We hope that, this year, the members of the Conference will be able to agree on changes to the institutional and procedural mechanisms of our forum which will enable us to resolve substantive issues more rapidly and effectively.

Agreement remains to be reached on the key issue, the programme of work of the Conference of Disarmament. The Russian delegation stands ready to engage in a joint search for compromise solutions.

In a few days' time, the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is due to commence in New York. It is our hope that a serious discussion will take place on the issues of the Treaty and the reasons analysed for foot-dragging in implementing the decisions taken by the previous Review Conference. Some of the issues to be discussed in New York are of direct relevance to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. The outcome of our efforts in Geneva will largely depend on what "baggage" delegations bring back from this first session of the Preparatory Committee. This applies, above all, to the prospects for beginning negotiations on the prohibition of the production of weapons-grade fissile material and for creating a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament. I already had occasion, in my January statement, to give assurances of the support from the Russian delegation for efforts to commence work in those directions.

The first session of the Preparatory Committee will take place in difficult circumstances. The problems in the area of strategic stability - following the decision by the United States to withdraw from the ABM Treaty - continue to worsen. We have been particularly disquieted by recent statements regarding the United States nuclear policy. Notwithstanding reassuring explanations in this regard, it seems that a transformation is taking place in that country in the approaches to the use of nuclear weapons and that there is, in particular, a recognition that these can be used in regional conflicts, including against non-nuclear weapon States. In our view, all of this - provided that it does reflect the actual situation - seriously weakens the basis of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

In connection with the forthcoming session of the Preparatory Committee, I would like to stress that the full range of issues relating to the NPT are among the top priorities for the Russian Federation. As a State party to the NPT and one of its depositaries, the Russian Federation considers that Treaty to be an important pillar in the system of international security. It is precisely the NPT which represents the main instrument serving to restrain the spread of nuclear weapons and, at the same time, promoting the development of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

For its part, Russia had worked consistently in fulfilment of its obligations under article 6 of the NPT. In so doing, we are proceeding both unilaterally and on a bilateral basis together with the United States. I would like to recall that the Russian Federation has ratified all treaties dealing with genuine nuclear disarmament, including START II and the CTBT. We are making concerted efforts to prevent the emergence of a vacuum in international law resulting from the United States decision to withdraw from the ABM Treaty.

Several rounds of negotiations between experts of the Russian Federation and the United States have already been held. The most recent took place here in Geneva, on 21 and 22 March. Attention at these negotiations was mainly focused on discussing a bilateral agreement on subsequent cuts in strategic offensive weapons and a declaration on a new strategic relationship, which could be signed during the May visit of the United States President to Russia.

For the purpose of strengthening strategic stability, we have suggested to the five permanent members of the Security Council that expert consultations should be held on the issues of non-proliferation. It is in this format that, on many occasions in the past, we have been able to achieve significant results in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

I would now like to turn specifically to the problems faced by the Conference on Disarmament. In May 2001, the Russian delegation submitted a package proposal on the programme of work of the Conference, seeking to achieve agreement on the two outstanding issues, namely, nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Before doing so, we had carefully studied all the proposals submitted by our partners since 1998, the last time that the programme of work had been adopted. Naturally, we paid special attention to the Amorim package, which enjoyed considerable support among delegations. We did not reject the Amorim ideas, but tried to develop them. Following consultations with the overwhelming majority of members of the Conference, the Russian delegation proposed, in document CD/1644, that two ad hoc committees should be established, one to consider the subject of nuclear disarmament and the other to negotiate a regime capable of preventing an arms race in outer space, which could take the form of a legally binding instrument.

We would like to stress that our agreement - for the first time during the entire period of Russia's participation in the Conference on Disarmament - to an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament was given after careful analysis of the situation, taking into account the views of

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

the majority of delegations and in accordance with the political commitments assumed by Russia under the decisions of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. It is our understanding that the overwhelming majority of delegations support Russia's draft mandate for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

In proposing our wording on PAROS; we also took into account the views of our partners on this issue. That is how we arrived at this particular option, which, in our view, does not run counter to the positions of any other delegations. We have taken as our precedent the experience gained from negotiating the mandate for the ad hoc committee on agenda item 4, relating to negative security assurances, which provided for negotiations "with a view to reaching agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. These arrangements could take the form of an internationally legally binding instrument". Notwithstanding differences in opinion regarding the prospects of elaborating a global agreement on negative security assurances, this text, as contained in document CD/1501, presented no difficulties and was adopted by consensus.

We have already had the opportunity to express our gratitude to all our partners who responded positively to our initiative. I would like to stress that the Russian delegation does not consider its wording to be cast in stone. Accordingly, before we officially submitted our proposals to the Conference on Disarmament, we acceded to the request of many delegations and substantially strengthened the language of the draft mandate for the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. As for the text on PAROS, this has remained unchanged since no specific proposals have been received in this regard. I would like today to reiterate our readiness to work together with all members of the Conference on the further refining of our proposals until a compromise is reached.

I would like to say a few more words on the subject of PAROS. Voices have been raised recently in these halls that the issue is supposedly "not yet ripe" for negotiation. We cannot agree with this position. We should like to cite several facts. For almost nine years, in the relevant ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament, intensive work has been under way in the major areas: examination and identification of problems related to PAROS; improvement of the current prevailing agreements relating to PAROS; and existing proposals and future initiatives on PAROS.

Discussions have focused on such issues as the status of outer space and its use exclusively for peaceful purposes; the need to prevent an arms race in outer space; identification of a possible danger to the functioning of space objects; interrelation between PAROS and arms limitation and disarmament; correlation of bilateral and multilateral efforts on PAROS; terminological aspects of outer space issues; the need to improve the corresponding legal regime for outer space, including verification measures; and confidence-building and predictability measures in outer space activities.

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

In other words, much work has already been done. An enormous number of issues have been dealt with. We are now in a position to say that our predecessors have fundamentally prepared the issue for negotiations. Developments in recent years have only increased the urgency of resolving the issue of PAROS. It is precisely for that reason that we now consider it essential to take all possible measures to keep outer space peaceful and to deliver future generations of negotiators in this Conference from the need to tackle such tasks as the "de-weaponization" of outer space.

Let me make one thing perfectly clear: PAROS negotiations are, without any question, among Russia's priorities in the Conference on Disarmament. We submit for discussion by the Conference the initiatives of the Russian Federation which were set before the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session by the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ivanov. We believe that the time has come to start the elaboration of comprehensive arrangements on the non-deployment of weapons in outer space, which, with regard to space objects, would reaffirm the principle of the non-use of force or threat of force in international relations. As a first step, agreement could be reached on a moratorium on the deployment of combat weapons in outer space, pending the conclusion of a relevant arrangement by the international community. We believe that, in our deliberations on PAROS, we could discuss the Chinese working paper entitled "Possible elements of the future international legal instrument on the prevention of the weaponization of outer space".

We support the consistent efforts of the members of the Group of 21 to promote the start of practical work in this area. Many other countries share our view of the danger of launching an arms race in outer space, as witness the recent statement to the Conference on Disarmament by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ms. A. Lindh. The joint action plan that was adopted during the recent official visit to Russia by the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Chrétien, in February 2002, stressed that both sides support the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We take a sympathetic view of the idea put forward recently by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, Mr. Graham, in his statement to the Conference, that an additional protocol be developed to the 1967 Outer Space Treaty to Prohibit the Deployment of Weapons in Outer Space. Finally, we note with satisfaction the statement made in February by the United States Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Javits, in which he concurred that the issue of PAROS was one of the priorities of the Conference. Thus, in our view, all that remains now is for us to translate words into deeds.

Today I would also like to review Russia's approach to the so-called non-controversial agenda items. The Russian Federation understands the legitimate aspirations of the non-nuclear weapon States parties to the NPT to be provided with assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We support the idea of re-establishing in the Conference an appropriate ad hoc committee with the same negotiating mandate as before, and we have no objection to the elaboration in the Conference of a global agreement on negative security assurances provided that this takes into account our fundamental reservations with regard to cases where nuclear weapons could be used in order to repel aggression.

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

We would like to reaffirm our readiness to enlarge the range of countries covered by the already existing system of security assurances, by stepping up the process of creating non-nuclear weapon zones and by cementing the obligations of non-nuclear countries not to acquire, station or deploy nuclear weapons on their terrorities.

Under item 6 of our agenda "Comprehensive programme of disarmament", the Russi in Federation supports the pursuit by the international community of the goal of a total ban on anti-personnel mines. Evidence of this may be seen in our active stand during the preparations for and conduct of the Second Review Conference on these inhumane weapons. At the same time, we are convinced that the mine problem needs to be resolved in a comprehensive manner, taking into account the actual defence-related needs and economic capabilities of each State.

We view a total ban on anti-personnel landmines as a goal which should be pursued through a series of agreed time-bound phases. The first, as we see it, could be the elaboration in the Conference on Disarmament of a universal ban on the transfer of anti-personnel land mines. By halting the spread of such mines, we will be able substantially to limit their uncontrolled use. In this regard, we have a real opportunity to enlist the involvement in negotiations of key producers and users of anti-personnel land mines and to develop constructive cooperation between States parties to the Ottawa Convention and those countries that have not yet acceded to it.

Russia attaches great importance to the issue of transparency in armaments, recognizing its positive role in creating a climate of confidence among different countries. Transparency in armaments could serve as an important lever in preventing the destabilizing stockpiling of arms and averting armed conflicts. We believe, however, that this process - the destabilizing stockpiling of conventional arms - would be more effectively checked if the transparency came first of all from importers. Information on arms procurement is more sensitive to importers, in terms of their national security, than it is to exporters.

In our view, the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects yielded positive results. Russia is already taking practical steps to implement the programme of action adopted by that conference. We are convinced that, in the absence of concerted international action to prevent illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, it will be impossible to resolve conflicts, to guarantee security for populations and to ensure the economic development of entire regions. In our view, the Conference on Disarmament is the optimum forum for further discussions on the issues of small arms and light weapons. We believe, however, that the Conference should define its role and possible contribution in this area in such a way as to avoid duplicating work that has already been done.

Another new focus for the Conference on Disarmament could, in our view, be the topic of missile non-proliferation. The broad participation at the recent Paris meeting on the draft international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation demonstrated the urgency of this task and the determination of most States to participate in its solution on the basis of a

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

multilateral approach. We noted the proposals made in Paris that work on the international code of conduct could be continued in the Conference on Disarmament. We proceed from the assumption that agreement on the code, together with activities of the panel of governmental experts entrusted with assisting the United Nations Secretary-General in preparing a report on the issue of missiles in all its aspects and Russia's initiative on establishing a global control system for the non-proliferation on missiles and missile technology, represents one of the important avenues by which non-proliferation can be ensured through political and diplomatic means.

In 2001, during the informal consultations on institutional and procedural issues in the Conference on Disarmament, the Russian delegation proposed that this question should be placed on the agenda of the Conference. We are happy to see that our ideas enjoy considerable support.

Mr. President, the problems of disarmament are, without any doubt, of a complicated nature and their solution will require all States to manifest determination, a sense of realism and a readiness to make compromises. We are convinced that, with your experience and leadership, you will be able to give added impetus to the work of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation for his statement, and I now give the floor to the next speaker, the distinguished representative of China, Ambassador Hu.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, may I begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to express our appreciation for the untiring efforts made by your predecessors, Mr. Fisscha Yimer and Mr. Mohamed Tawfik. We are also happy to see Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze take up his duties as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and we would like to extend our congratulations to him.

Today I would like to focus on two issues: prevention of an arms race in outer space and a fissile material cut-off treaty. Where outer space is concerned, we have seen the following developments during the 20 years since the Star Wars initiatives was first unveiled: considerable headway has been made in the sphere of outer space-related military and weapon technologies and weapons and weapons systems that in the past were mere blueprints are now being given real form. The ABM Treaty has been unilaterally rejected. The missile defence project currently being pushed forward in all its aspects has now quite openly incorporated outer-space weapons systems as one of its main components. Optimal use has been made of the relevant organizations and resources to ensure the swift and successful conclusion of this project.

In the meantime, certain operational concepts have been advanced in rapid succession, such as exercising control of space and asserting superiority in outer space, and both the theory of the perfect war in outer space and the command structures for such a war are now firmly in

(Mr. Hu, China)

place. About one year ago the first space war exercises were held, simulating the use of anti-satellite weapons, strategic missile defence systems and land-based laser weapons to attack space targets. Work is underway to set in place and further develop battle units for outer space. Parallel efforts are being conducted on the fashioning of missile defence systems and development of space weapons and plans to gain control of space have entered the implementation stage.

All these developments are evidence of the imminent danger of the weaponization of outer space, which will have among its consequences not only the possibility of an arms race in outer space but also serious damage to the international disarmament process and global strategic balance and stability. This runs directly counter to the benign aspiration of the international community to make peaceful use of outer space. For this reason, the task of preventing the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space is one of particular urgency today. As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament should face up to this reality and take effective action to meet this challenge.

Over the last 50 years humankind has lived through the process of research and development of nuclear weapons, their deployment and then their reduction . History has shown us how arduous a task it is to negotiate nuclear disarmament once these weapons have already been developed and deployed. Only by adopting urgent measures to prevent the weaponization of outer space, by nipping this peril in the bud, so to speak, will we be able to ensure that future generations of humankind are not confronted with the complex and intractable problem of disarming outer space and preventing the proliferation of weapons in outer space.

The events of September 11 demonstrate yet again that the dangers threatening the security of the international community are more diversified and global in nature, and marked by an increasing asymmetry. States are becoming ever more interdependent for their security. Any country, no matter how powerful, has to engage in and strengthen cooperation with others. Only in this way can States effectively meet their various security challenges and ensure their comprehensive and long-lasting peace and security.

Given the above considerations and concerns about the danger of a future "space Pearl Harbour", it has become ever more critical for all countries to strengthen their cooperation in their joint efforts to forestall this danger by concluding multilateral disarmament treaties that regulate the national behaviour of countries. Any attempt by countries to seek redress through military means, such as by developing outer space weapons, would run counter to the contemporary climate in favour of peace and development and would not be conducive to a fundamental settlement of the issue.

On numerous occasions I have heard statements by the representatives of many countries that the best way to strengthen international security is by establishing and strengthening the relevant multilateral legal regimes. It is apparent that, in a situation where the existing outer space legal instruments fall far short of meeting the new challenges, the only means of ensuring that the interests and assets of all States in outer space are safeguarded on an equal footing and

(Mr. Hu, China)

that valuable resources are channelled towards the peaceful use of outer space is by negotiating and concluding legally binding instruments to prohibit the weaponization of outer space and prevent an arms race in outer space. In this regard, the choice to be made by the major Powers with space weapons capabilities is undoubtedly of paramount importance.

At the General Assembly in 2001, the Russian Federation put forward a positive proposal calling for a moratorium on the deployment of weapons in outer space and the prohibition of the weaponization of outer space. China fully supports this proposal. We have always maintained that the Conference on Disarmament should re-establish an ad hoc committee on PAROS and commence negotiations with a view to concluding one or more legal instruments on the prohibition of the weaponization of outer space. In 1985 China submitted a working paper, contained in document CD/579, entitled "Basic position on the prevention of an arms race in outer space". In 2000 and 2001, China submitted two working papers entitled, respectively, "China's position on and suggestions for ways to address the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space at the Conference on Disarmament" (CD/1606) and "Possible elements of the future international legal instrument on the prevention of the weaponization of outer space" (CD/1645).

In the past, the Conference on Disarmament had an ad hoc committee on PAROS for 10 years in a row and the many ideas, suggestions and proposals put forward by all sides over this period provide us with a rich store of material for the launching of substantive work in this field and a working basis for the negotiation and ultimate conclusion of the relevant legal instruments on this issue. As for the mandate of the ad hoc committee on PAROS, the Chinese delegation has already put forward its proposal, which is contained in document CD/1576. We also support the proposals on this issue by the Group of 21 and the delegation of the Russian Federation, which are contained in documents CD/1570 and CD/1644, respectively.

China has always supported the idea of negotiating and concluding a fissile material cut-off treaty and believes that the conclusion of such a treaty would be of great significance in promoting nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. As early as March 1999, the Chinese President Jiang Zemin, in his address to the Conference on Disarmament, appealed for negotiations to be conducted as soon as possible for the conclusion of a universal and verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty and expressed his conviction that such a treaty, once concluded, would be yet another major achievement after the CTBT in the promotion of nuclear disarmament and prevention of nuclear proliferation.

Owing to the series of negative developments in the field of disarmament and arms control in recent years - developments with which we are all too familiar, it has not yet been possible to launch negotiations on FMCT. This is something that we are not happy to see. I would like once again to stress that China's position on FMCT has not changed: we still favour and look forward to the early start of negotiations on this issue in the Conference on Disarmament and intend to participate in the negotiation process as soon as agreement is reached on the Conference's programme of work.

(Mr. Hu, China)

In view of the current situation regarding international security and arms control, the Chinese delegation is of the opinion that the Conference's core issues, including PAROS, FMCT, nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances, should be accorded equal importance and dealt with in a balanced way. PAROS is just as important as fissile material cut-off, if not more important. Accordingly, there is no reason for the ad hoc committee on PAROS not to begin its substantive work with a view to reaching agreement on an international legal instrument on preventing the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space. The delegation of the Russian Federation has put forward a good proposal on the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament, which is contained in document CD/1644. We hope that the Conference is able to take this as the basis for commencing substantive work on the above issues at the earliest possible juncture.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of China for his statement.

Distinguished colleagues, the next speaker on my list is Ambassador Les Luck, who will soon be completing his duties as representative of his country to the Conference on Disarmament. Allow me to bid farewell to Ambassador Luck

You joined the Conference in March 1999, three years ago. During your tenure you have always presented the position of your Government with authority and diplomatic talent. Your vast knowledge of arms control and disarmament was particularly appreciated by all of us when you presided over the Conference during the final weeks of its 1999 session. As President you led the Conference successfully through the difficult process of drafting its report to the General Assembly. Your intensive consultations, as well as the subsequent imaginative and impartial analysis of the work, laid strong foundations for further development of the programme of work. Your diplomatic skills have also been recognized in other disarmament forums in Geneva. In the BWC Ad Hoc Group you performed your duties as friend of the chair on legal issues with distinction and diplomatic talent. Your exemplary performance in the function of the President of the Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and your perseverance in pursuing new challenges in the area of humanitarian law culminated in the successful conclusion of the Review Conference last December, thereby establishing a solid basis for the elaboration of new protocols to the Convention.

I am very happy give you the floor and, as the current President, I would most particularly like to hear your advice on how to continue our business when we come back after the six-week break. Ambassador Luck, you have the floor.

Mr. LUCK (Australia): That is indeed a challenge, but I do thank you for your kind remarks reflecting on the period of my three years here. As you said, I will shortly complete my appointment here, both in Geneva and to this Conference, and I have taken the floor just to make some brief remarks, as has been the custom with departing colleagues. But first let me say how pleased I am to see you presiding over this Conference. You were the first colleague that I met in this current assignment when you visited Canberra shortly before I came, and it has been a pleasure working with you.

(Mr. Luck, Australia)

Normally such occasions are a moment for reflection on particular developments, aspirations or achievements. This is not an easy task in the context of the Conference on Disarmament, for reasons that are familiar to us all.

Having arrived in Geneva after the "false dawn" of late 1998, when people started to think that we might be getting down to substantive work, I find myself among the first ambassadors to the Conference on Disarmament - including my good friend and colleague, Seiichiro Noboru, Ambassador of Japan - to be leaving their post with no first-hand experience of the Conference conducting formal, substantive work on matters before it.

It is a matter of regret that, collectively, we have missed opportunities to engage purposefully and at a truly substantive level in the security, arms control and disarmament challenges before us.

I was reminded only yesterday that, when I was President of the Conference in the latter part of 1999, I observed that the Conference on Disarmament is: "the sum of its parts - of the policies, perspectives and political will of its constituent States". This was an expression of the sentiment often voiced among us that our dilemma is our collective responsibility, and that there is no point in apportioning blame. That is so. But equally, I believe it important to be mindful of the fact that the situation we find ourselves in has been contrived; it has been arrived at wilfully. The deadlock could be relaxed - just as wilfully.

I believe that this will already exists across almost the entire membership of the Conference on Disarmament; and that those countries would willingly embark on substantive work, much along the lines set out in CD/1624 - the Amorim proposal. While not perfect, this for most - including Australia - is self-evidently the best prescription for starting work. That the consensus rule is invoked to prevent us from doing so is difficult to accept.

The situation in the Conference on Disarmament reminds me of an experience I had many years ago as a child. I had been given a pocket knife; nothing at all as potent as the Swiss Army knives that we see around, something quite small. Nonetheless, the first thing that happened was that my father blunted the blade on a stone to "save me", as a small kid, from its dangers. I am pleased to say that knife never did cut my finger. But the reality is that it never made much of an impression on anything else either.

To come back to our Conference, I sometimes think that there is a patrician reflex at work here; seeking to save us from ourselves. Can it be that we are misguided in wanting to get on with negotiating subjects, such as FMCT, which we agree are ready for negotiation, while at the same time exploring in a serious way other relevant subjects and issues? Are we not capable of doing so? To those whose fatherly worries put a brake on our endeavours here, my advice is: relax. Let the Conference take its own course, confident that it will find a way of addressing each of the main issues with insight and sensitivity.

(Mr. Luck, Australia)

No country's fundamental interests will be placed in jeopardy by the Conference simply agreeing to address the main subjects before us in the manner which finds most acceptance among its members, which is that described in document CD/1624. Each delegation will have ample opportunity to protect and advance its interests once real work begins.

In this vein, Mr. President, I hope that your own energetic and imaginative efforts will help all delegations come to see things in this light. It really is essentially a question of deciding, wilfully, that the Conference can be trusted to get on with its business without prejudice to the concerns and priorities of any delegation. I wish you every success.

For its part, Australia acknowledges the long-standing consensus on the FMCT negotiating priority as the next step to be taken by this body. FMCT will be a useful - indeed essential - step in support of nuclear disarmament on the simple logic that negotiations about reductions require confidence that there is no fresh production of fissile material for weapons purposes. The sooner such negotiations start - and cooperative verification arrangements are put in place - the better.

And what of the other priority issues? It is true that different countries have different priorities. It is also true that the non-FMCT issues have failed to command a similar degree of collective priority. But are we not missing real opportunities by not addressing PAROS and nuclear disarmament concerns in this chamber - even if that falls short of negotiation?

Let the dialogue deepen and grow - and in the case of FMCT, let us start negotiating. That will bring real benefits - not least in proving that we are still capable of engaging constructively, and on the basis of consensus, in the pursuit of security and disarmament objectives.

Australia has a number of international security priorities which are addressed by our delegation here, if not always in the Conference on Disarmament itself. I need not rehearse those here, having done so in my statement earlier this session.

It remains for me to bid friends and colleagues farewell and wish them every success in their future endeavours here. I have genuinely appreciated the friendship and camaraderie of this forum - and of you all - as we have tried to contribute constructively. I am especially grateful to those who collaborated with me and my delegation in achieving strengthening of the CCW regime at the Second Review Conference late last year. I look forward to hearing of good progress in the further work which is planned this year.

This is not a time for naming names. But among those I will miss is our friend and colleague Clive Pearson, the former New Zealand Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament. Illness prevented Ambassador Pearson from making his own farewell statement in this forum, and I know he would have liked to have done so. As we approach the resumed NPT review cycle we are reminded of the invaluable contribution which Clive Pearson and his

(Mr. Luck, Australia)

able colleague, Ambassador Joan Mosley, then based in Vienna, made to the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Friends will be pleased to know that Clive was well and truly in recovery mode when I saw him last week, a few days before his return to New Zealand. I am also glad to have had the opportunity to know his successor, Ambassador Tim Caughley, and wish him every success.

As always I am appreciative of the work of the secretariat, of Vladimir Petrovsky, who served as Secretary-General of the Conference for nine years until recently, of his deputy Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, and of other members of the secretariat for their valuable support. I wish the new Secretary-General, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, well during his term.

I will miss this place for what might have been. I will miss the old jokes about the curtains, opened or closed, darkness or light. But mostly my wife Jenny and I will miss our friends and colleagues here.

For the present, then, I say thank you and farewell to you all.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Luck for his very thoughtful statement and very kind words addressed to the Chair, and on behalf of the Conference and myself, I should like to wish him and his family all the best in his career and personal life.

I now come to address the second ambassador who intends to leave us, Ambassador Seiichiro Noboru of Japan. He has been with us in the Conference on Disarmament only for two years, but he has served here with remarkable authority, which has earned him well-deserved recognition. We all remember his commitment to overcoming the stalemate of the Conference and we are still looking forward to his solution. We also applaud his multifarious efforts aimed at launching negotiations on the prohibition of fissile material. We all owe him a debt of gratitude for organizing and sponsoring a number of seminars and workshops, not only here but also in his capital city, facilitating the achievement of this goal and also for providing us with prompt and detailed information on disarmament-related activities organized by his Government. He also made an important contribution to the BWC Ad Hoc Group as friend of the chair on the seat of the future organization. He discharged his duties with a high degree of professionalism, with unwavering dedication and with unique diplomatic talent. I would like to recall his commendable interest in and support for the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship and Training Programme, the programme which for years has been boosting the expertise of young diplomats in the field of arms limitation, so that they could continue our common efforts, and I think that it is very fitting that you have your colleagues in the hall to listen to your statement today.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Seiichiro Noboru.

Mr. NOBORU (Japan): Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, since this is the first time that I have taken the floor during your tenure, Mr. President, one of my most admired colleagues here in Geneva, let me first offer you my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Although currently facing one of its most difficult challenges, I trust that the Conference will be able to engage in most meaningful deliberations under your effective guidance, and I assure you of the full support of my delegation.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, a talented diplomat with enormous experience, on his appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference. I am most confident that the Conference will receive even more valuable and indispensable support from the secretariat under his leadership.

And Mr. President, I would also like to convey my personal appreciation for the extremely kind and warm words which you have addressed to me.

I must confess that it never occurred to me that I would have to make a farewell statement at such an early stage. My departure from the post of Disarmament Ambassador, which I have valued so much, might seem unduly precipitate, with the first meeting of the NPT Preparatory Committee just 10 days away. This departure, however, does not represent the waning of my Government's interest in disarmament or its frustration over the current stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to assure you that this is only a routine change to be followed soon by the appointment of a brilliant successor.

Since I made a general statement just six weeks ago, I do not have anything much to add regarding the current situation in the Conference on Disarmament. I would just like to say that today we could be celebrating our 900th meeting of the Conference if the situation were different. Unfortunately, we have nothing to celebrate. I am reminded today of the first plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament that I attended exactly two years ago. It was the 847th meeting and, like today, was the last meeting for the first part of the 2000 session. Since then 54 meetings have been held, and still the Conference has neither agreed on a programme of work nor has it engaged in negotiations or substantive discussions. I recall that the shortest meeting which I attended lasted a mere three minutes. This stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament has indeed been frustrating and regrettable for all of us here, but I do not think that it has been just a waste of time. Rather, I see it as an inevitable process which the Conference must go through before arriving at a significant agreement. It could be likened to birth pangs. I am certain that the Japanese proverb which goes: "A child born of a difficult delivery grows well" will also prove, in the end, to be true of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the same time, however, I firmly believe that this painstaking process cannot, and should not, be sustained too long. The entire international community is calling insistently for progress in multilateral disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament has been waiting over the past years for a sound international security environment to be created, but neither has this

(Mr. Noboru, Japan)

perseverance produced any tangible results, nor has it offered any rosy prospects. I therefore firmly believe that it is time for the Conference to be more proactive. We all know very well what our differences are with respect to the wording of certain mandates and, in my view, those differences are not so great. I am convinced that, with some more initiatives and ideas, we must be able to reach agreement to commence work in this forum.

We are all fully capable of working out solutions. Again, it is high time for each and every one of us to strengthen our determination and solidarity in order to bridge the prevailing differences among us. I would like to call upon all delegates to extend maximum assistance and cooperation to our President, so that he can lead the Conference to an agreement on his ingenious initiatives.

Since the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 in the United States, there is increasing international interest in advancing disarmament by multilateral means. Threats to international peace and security appear to be growing more rapidly than expected. The Conference on Disarmament can do many things to deal with such threats, once it agrees on a programme of work. On the other hand, if the Conference remains in its stalemate, I am afraid that the fabric of international security based on the NPT regime will further unravel. In order to contribute to urgent global needs more effectively, I believe political attention ought to be focused more keenly on the Conference on Disarmament. One possible way of achieving this could be to hold regular ministerial meetings which would provide the work of the Conference on Disarmament with political incentive and dynamism. The first such meeting could be scheduled for early next year. This would certainly enable the Conference to play a more active role in contributing to world peace and security.

Mr. President, colleagues and friends, I would like to thank you very much for the great assistance, encouragement and intellectual input that has been extended to me during my stay in Geneva. Above all, I am most grateful for all the friendships that I have been able to develop here.

Last but not least, I would like to extend my special gratitude to Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Zaleski, and all the other staff of the secretariat for the invaluable professional assistance that they have extended to me and my delegation. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to all the interpreters for their dedication and efficiency.

(continued in French)

Allow me also to thank you all for your kindness and cooperation. It is a sad moment for me to have to take my leave of you and I shall remember always the extremely cordial atmosphere that prevails in the Conference on Disarmament.

Finally, Mr. President, may I express my sincere hope that you are able to find in the very near future the sort of compromise that will enable substantive and productive work to commence as soon as possible.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Japan, Ambassador Noboru, for his statement, and on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, I wish him and his family all success and happiness in future assignments.

Ladies and gentlemen, this brings the list of speakers to an end. Is there anyone who would like to take the floor at this juncture? I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of India.

Mr. SOOD (India): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I have had the opportunity to take the floor during your tenure as President of the Conference, allow me to congratulate you on your appointment and to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in the performance of the responsibilities that you carry. I would also like to take the floor to congratulate Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, our Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, on his appointment and to wish him luck in the responsibilities that he has been assigned.

I did not plan to ask for the floor or to make a statement today, but I have been obliged to do so largely in order to set the record straight with regard to some of the actually inaccurate and erroneous statements that we have heard this morning. I think it is important to recall here that India has been and remains the initiator of dialogue with Pakistan. It was those efforts at bilateral dialogue that have led to various agreements which now do not find mention in many Pakistani statements. And here I refer to the 1972 Simla Agreement, the resumption of talks at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in 1990 on security and confidence-building measures, the eight-point composite dialogue process that began in 1998, the Lahore Declaration and the memorandum of understanding on confidence-building measures that was signed in 1999. I mention these merely to drive home the fact that dialogue with Pakistan has always been a sustained policy for India, not merely dialogue for the sake of dialogue but dialogue as a means of resolving outstanding issues, and this includes the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, which finds mention in these initiatives, be it the Simla Agreement or the Lahore Declaration or the eight-point composite dialogue process.

But pursuit of dialogue, pursuit of meaningful dialogue, shall I say, requires dedication and trust, and trust is not built if dialogue is accompanied by the active sponsorship of cross-border terrorism to change the status quo in Jammu and Kashmir. Trust is not built by engaging in dialogue in spring and committing aggression in summer, as we saw in 1999, when, three months after the historic Lahore visit, we were surprised by the invasion in Kargil.

We understand that, in recent months, the Government in Pakistan has had to make very difficult choices. We are encouraged by some of the recent statements that have been made by General Musharraf, the President of Pakistan, and in particular the speech that he delivered on 12 January 2002. One thing it does is make it clear that the Government of Pakistan understands the extent of the problem and the challenges that it faces and the implications of these problems and challenges for Pakistan's own internal security. The presence of about 10 million illicit small arms and light weapons and their widespread use and the linkage

(Mr. Sood, India)

between small arms proliferation and narcotics are issues with which, I am certain, any Government would find it difficult to deal, and certainly the Government of Pakistan in its statements has shown its concern about these issues.

The fact that President Musharraf in his speeches recently has spoken about the need to regulate the 10,000-12,000 madrassas in Pakistan, the fact that he has spoken about the requirement that madrassas will not be permitted to provide weapons training, the fact that the foreign students - about 50,000 of them - must obtain permission from the countries to which they belong and that the 700,000 Pakistani students in these madrassas will now be given secular training, including on computers and in sciences, etc. - I believe that all these are very positive steps and difficult steps. Seven organizations have been banned, one of which - the Jaish-e-Mohammed - claimed responsibility for an attack on the Jammu and Kashmir State Assembly on 1 October 2001, and another - the Lashkar-e-Toiba - claimed responsibility for the attack on 13 December on the Indian Parliament. We understood that about 2,000 people have been detained but, according to what we now understand, about 1,300 have already been released, and nobody has as yet been charged.

These are, as I see it, some of the difficult choices that the Government of Pakistan is dealing with at this stage and, for this reason, we have said that, in order to pursue dialogue with the seriousness and purposefulness that it merits and deserves, we would like to see some evidence of Pakistan's commitment in the same direction. We would like to see Pakistan either show some movement in terms of handing over certain well-known terrorists that have been in Pakistan, and a list has been provided with their details. And we have also said that we would like to see some evidence of a cessation of cross-border infiltration, which will serve as a real demonstration of Pakistan's commitment and help move the dialogue forward.

I would just like to add that, insofar as the deployment of Indian forces is concerned, if we do get a commitment from the Government of Pakistan on these two benchmarks, then the Government of India will certainly be willing to move forward the dialogue and de-escalation steps. Otherwise, it is also important for the Government of India to maintain these forces with a view to ensuring an environment in which elections in Jammu and Kashmir - which are scheduled for the second half of this year - can be conducted in a peaceful environment if we do not have guarantees that terrorism or infiltration from across the border will not continue, as these activities will naturally have a negative impact on these elections.

Mr. President, let me therefore just reiterate that if we do receive positive signs from the Government of Pakistan that it is serious about being a member of the coalition in the war against terrorism, then we will certainly be in a position to respond positively and favourably and to commence dialogue in the hope that this will be purposeful and not end up in the kind of stalemate or impasse that we have seen in the past.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished Ambassador of India for his statement, and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Akram.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, it was not my intention either to take the floor. I think the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan has amply outlined Pakistan's policies with regard to disarmament and arms control and non-proliferation.

Before turning to the reason why I have asked to respond to my distinguished colleague from India, let me take this opportunity also to extend my felicitations to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency and on the efforts that you are making to get the work of the Conference started. You can count on our support. I would also like to extend my felicitations to your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Yimer of Ethiopia, and to our colleague from Egypt. I would also like to extend a personal welcome to Secretary-General Sergei Ordzhonikidze on his assumption of his new post. We shall, I am sure, have occasion to cooperate very closely with him and will depend on his support.

I have listened to the farewell speeches of two of my distinguished colleagues, Ambassador Luck of Australia and Ambassador Seiichiro Noboru of Japan. I must tell them that they are the third representatives of both their countries to whom I have had to say farewell. Obviously, I have been here too long, but I assure you that I shall myself be making my farewell statement in the near future. I do not think, however, that the Conference on Disarmament has been wasting its time during their tenures. I believe that our discussions are important if only to express the frustrations and concerns of the vast majority of the member States of the international community about the threats to their security which they confront in the current global environment.

It was in that spirit of drawing attention to our concerns about the threat to Pakistan's security which impelled my Minister for Foreign Affairs to come here and to share these concerns with our colleagues in the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to underline that in our region, as in any other region, the threat to security arises from both capabilities as well as intentions. In our region, we have a neighbour - India - which is a large country. It has nuclear weapons and has announced a nuclear doctrine which would envisage the acquisition of a triad of land, air and sea nuclear forces that, according to the draft nuclear doctrine, would constitute about 400 nuclear warheads at the very least, with a second-strike capability. India is developing missiles of a vast array: the Prithvi, the short-range missile, which they say is Pakistan-specific; the Agni, the short and medium-range missile; the Dhanush, the naval version of the Prithvi; the Sagarika submarine-launched ballistic missile; and the BrahMos, the supersonic cruise missile, which is being developed jointly with Russia; it is also on the point of acquiring the Phalcon early-warning system, and development of the Surya ICBM is continuing.

In the conventional field, India's plans are to acquire advanced arms to the tune of 100 billion dollars over the next 15 years. This is according to Indian news reports. This includes an aircraft carrier, 11 submarines, a large number of front-line aircraft from various sources - in addition to the present land forces, which it has, namely, 3,500 tanks, new artillery acquired recently, again from various sources, helicopter gunships, etc. About three fourths of the total Indian armed forces of over 1 million men are deployed against Pakistan. And these had been deployed against Pakistan much before the incident which India claims to be the casus belli for moving its troops into battle positions.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

Today, India has moved its missiles, the Prithvi and the Agni, according to the Indian Defence Minister, into battle-ready positions. Pakistan, on the contrary, has not done so, although we would be quite within our rights to do so. President Musharraf has declared that we will keep our nuclear weapons unweaponized and not co-located with delivery systems. This was a public statement. We have not seen a matching statement from India. Indian leaders speak, on the contrary, about the feasibility of a limited war against Pakistan.

I would like to take this opportunity once again to underline the dangers of such a doctrine, the dangers of such a mistaken belief on the part of Indian leaders that they can go to war with Pakistan and keep it limited. Do not bet on it.

My colleague from India has spoken with an air of - do I perhaps recall that Ambassador Luck used the word "patronizing"? - about the problems of Pakistan. Like any other country, we have problems and we are honest enough to say that we have them, and our President goes before the nation to say that he intends to deal with these problems with a firm hand and to root out all the extremism and terrorism. But people who live in glasshouses ought not to cast stones.

I wonder if my distinguished colleague of India has read about the atrocities that were committed only a few weeks ago in the Indian state of Gujarat? These atrocities were committed by a party called the VHP, which is a member of the ruling coalition in New Delhi. These thugs brutalized innocent Muslim men, women and children, killing pregnant women in front of everybody, while Indian police watched, and even participated in some of these atrocities. Is the killing of these innocents not terrorism? What is the Government of India doing to punish these terrorists, who killed over 1,000 innocent Muslims in Gujarat last month? Why does it not move its army into Gujarat, instead of playing brinkmanship with Pakistan?

Mr. President, capabilities India has, but also intentions. The intentions have been writ large in the statements of Indian leaders over the past several months and years. Let us not forget that the BJP, and I now quote from The Economist of last week: "The BJP rode to power in the early 1990s on a tide of religious bigotry, exploiting the Ayodhya issue for electoral gain. One of its senior figures, L.K. Advani, made the Ram campaign" - i.e. the campaign to demolish the Babri Mosque and construct a Hindu temple on its site - "made the Ram campaign his own, and used to give speeches beneath a flag that showed India as a single saffron block - with pre-Partition boundaries and Pakistan swallowed up inside."

It is these people who are in power in Delhi today and whose armies are arrayed in battle positions against Pakistan. Nevertheless, we exercise self-restraint. But when India makes demands on Pakistan: "Hand over terrorists" - who defines "terrorists"? Why does India not punish its own terrorists first? Those who killed innocent Muslims in Gujarat, for instance? Those who killed 3,000 Muslims in Bombay in 1994? Who gives India the right to make demands on Pakistan, a sovereign State? We will punish our own terrorists. We will punish the terrorists we find, and we shall do so with justice - and not at the beck and call of New Delhi.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

I believe that what the world needs to do is to bring the leaders in New Delhi to exercise some measure of restraint. The day before yesterday they passed a law, known by its abbreviation POTO, that is designed to enable the Indian State to impose all manner of incarcerations and detentions on anybody at any time without any explanation. This fascist law epitomizes the attitude of the brutal regime that occupies the seat of power in New Delhi.

We are for peace. We want dialogue with India. But dialogue is not a favour that India will grant us. Dialogue is meant to promote mutual interests, to address mutual problems - and God knows, we have many of them. If India has a responsible attitude, it will respond positively to the hand of friendship extended by President Musharraf to Prime Minister Vajpayee in Kathmandu and join us in a dialogue. In that dialogue we can raise with each other whatever complaints, whatever issues, but blackmail cannot be the road to dialogue.

Finally, Mr. President, let me underline that the struggle in Kashmir is a legitimate struggle. It is a struggle for self-determination which has been endorsed by the United Nations Security Council in several resolutions. India is obliged to implement those resolutions, and we call upon India once again to live up to its obligations under the United Nations Charter to implement those resolutions. The Kashmiri struggle is not terrorism. The Kashmiri people have the right to defend themselves against the 700,000 Indian troops who occupy their land and who have killed 80,000 Kashmiri youth, young Kashmiris who lie buried in the graveyards of Kashmir. They were not cross-border terrorists. They were Kashmiris fighting for their freedom. We call on India to respect the wishes of the Kashmiri people, to respect the Security Council resolutions, and to join us in a dialogue to find a just solution to Kashmir. That is the road to peace and not blackmail. Pakistan will never submit to blackmail.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Pakistan for his statement. I do not see any more requests for the floor.

This first half of the Finnish presidency has been very intensive and, before we go into our break, allow me to make some closing remarks.

We were very pleased to see eminent ministers for foreign affairs addressing this forum at every plenary, and I consider this a fulfilment of the proposal just made by Ambassador Noboru - why not have ministerial meetings? But this is perhaps a preparatory stage for addressing that kind of initiative.

We are now going into a six-week break. I hope it can be fruitful, productive and provide us new vigour when we are back in Geneva and in the Conference on Disarmament. My team and I are very grateful for your support and encouragement for our endeavours since we took over the presidency last week. All 66 delegations count here. We appreciate your cooperation.

Our approach has been to focus on practical and specific questions in a most pragmatic and systematic way, not forgetting the rules of the game or your national positions. But my point is that only via concrete dialogue, concrete work, can we make a real contribution.

(The President)

For your information, you will find our practical ideas in the form of an informal paper in your pigeonholes. We promise that we will try to get it to you this afternoon. It is already afternoon - 12.22 p.m. So please look at them if you are interested. We hope that they are clear and self-explanatory. We have tried to indicate it very clearly in our consultations, and we hope that you do not find any surprises. We do expect you to consider them with professional care and in a constructive spirit, because they are meant to be food for thought for continuing our consultations when we come back.

I wish you all a rewarding recess and will see you here at the latest at our next plenary, with which we will commence the second part of our presidency on Thursday, 16 May 2002, at 10 a.m. in this room.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.901
16 May 2002

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 16 May 2002, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Markku Reimaa (Finland)

GE.02-61469 (E) 230502 270502

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 901st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I welcome you all back to Geneva and to the Conference on Disarmament, and at the outset, let me also, on behalf of the Conference, extend a warm welcome to the new Permanent Representative of Australia, Ambassador Michael Smith, and assure him of our cooperation and support in his new assignment.

If you permit, I have a few words to address to this first plenary meeting of the second half of the Finnish presidency.

When we last met on 28 March, your President invited specific ideas on how we might unblock the current impasse in the Conference. Since 28 March, we have continued bilateral discussions and consultations on that basis. I must confess that I am personally encouraged, and we will intensify these contacts during the last week of the Finnish presidency.

It has been mentioned here on several occasions that the Conference on Disarmament does not exist in isolation from the outside world. I believe that this is particularly true today. It is my hope that we can make common conclusions on that basis. The main purpose of our efforts has been and still is to help us engage in practical and substantive work as soon as possible and in that way to bring about a change in the experience of recent years. Everybody knows that a possible initiation of work would make a difference to our current daily routines, but we have been convinced in our consultations that practically all delegations would be ready to contribute to that kind of change.

The last meeting of the Finnish presidency will take place next Thursday, 23 May. We will be in touch with you before that through the presidential consultations channel and, as we have tried to indicate, our delegation remains available for discussions any time you might wish.

As to today's scenario, I do not have any speakers on my list for the moment. I am ready to give the floor to anybody wishing to address the meeting. I recognize the distinguished representative of Spain, Ambassador Miranda.

Mr. MIRANDA (Spain) (translated from Spanish): I take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The European Union welcomes the announcement that, next week, the Presidents of the United States of America and the Russian Federation will sign an agreement to reduce their nuclear arsenals. The European Union is convinced that this positive event will provide a new opportunity for relaunching the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament.

We encourage the President of the Conference, Ambassador Reimaa, to continue his efforts to reach a consensus that will lead to the resumption of the Conference's work at the earliest possible stage. We urge all delegations to assist the President in this undertaking.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Spain for his statement and thank the European Union for the support that they have shown towards our efforts. Does anyone else wish to take the floor today?

Before adjourning this meeting, I would like to recall that the Special Coordinator on the Expansion of the Membership of the Conference, Ambassador Tzantchev of Bulgaria, will hold informal open-ended consultations on this topic immediately following this plenary meeting. So we might have a short break after this plenary. Furthermore, before closing, I would like to inform you that the Special Coordinator on the Improved and Effective Functioning of the Conference, Ambassador Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka, will hold informal open-ended consultations on his topic not on Tuesday, as originally indicated, but next Thursday, 23 May, after the official plenary.

The next plenary will be in one week's time, Thursday, 23 May, starting at 10 a.m., and I hope that we might take a flexible approach in what will be the last plenary meeting under the Finnish presidency. Please make sure that you have the necessary time available. I am even keeping the option open that we might open that plenary with an informal meeting first.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.902
23 May 2002

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 23 May 2002, at 11.45 a.m.

President: Mr. Markku Reimaa (Finland)

GE.02-62249 (E) 250602 260602

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 902nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I would like to extend, on behalf of us all, a most warm welcome to the new Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi. Madam, you are most welcome and I would like to assure you of our full cooperation and support.

Ms. INOGUCHI (Japan): Mr. President, I would like to thank you and all the members of the Conference for your kind words of welcome. I have been a professor of political science for many years, and this is my first ambassadorial post. I appreciate the assurances of your help and extend my warmest regards to all of you.

The PRESIDENT: I have two names on my list of speakers, the representatives of South Africa and Belgium. I give the floor to the distinguished representative of South Africa.

Mr. MARKRAM (South Africa): Mr. President, I would like first to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. As you have pointed out, this is your last operative day and, in this regard, we would like to express our appreciation for your enthusiasm and for your determination in trying to get us to substantive work. My delegation would, of course, have continued to lend you its full support and cooperation. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the distinguished ambassadors of Australia and Japan.

It is obviously with deep regret that the Conference on Disarmament, which is defined as "the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community" and which "has the primary role in substantive negotiations on priority questions of disarmament", has remained unable to agree on a programme of work. This is despite the fact that there is almost unanimous support in the Conference for some mechanism to deal with the issues about which we have been deliberating over the last few years. This is despite the fact that there is general agreement that nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and banning the production of fissile materials are concerns of the entire international community and that United Nations General Assembly resolutions call on us to deal with these issues.

I believe that it is incumbent upon me to make the point to those delegations who continue to refuse to recognize the legitimate concerns of other States, while insisting that we should respect and show understanding for theirs, that continued intransigence is likely to exacerbate and not to improve the situation.

South Africa would urge the delegations involved to reconsider again their positions, because proposals over the last months and those presently under discussion reflect a very moderate approach, far less than our own national positions and those of other delegations in this room.

(Mr. Markram, South Africa)

I did not speak at the informals before this, but it should be clear from my statement that we can support the current proposal, as we could the proposals of many of the previous presidents of the Conference.

The prime reason for me asking for the floor today is to introduce a working paper on the possible scope and requirements of a fissile material treaty. We have taken the floor on earlier occasions to elaborate on South Africa's views on this issue, but we hope that, by introducing this paper, we can add a little more constructive focus to an issue that has been long overdue for negotiation in this body. This would hopefully also complement the noteworthy efforts, particularly by the Netherlands, Japanese and Australian delegations in Geneva, to sustain and promote interest in negotiating a fissile material treaty.

The South African working paper attempts to deal with some of the most vexing issues that negotiations on a fissile material treaty present. South Africa has, by virtue of its own unique historical experience with the destruction of a limited nuclear weapons programme and the completeness investigation undertaken by the International Atomic Energy Agency, acquired some practical insights that may be of some benefit to member States. This is particularly the case regarding stocks, where we underline the difficulties associated with this issue and offer what we consider to be a practical, achievable and effective manner of dealing with the issue in a way that fulfils nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. I would like to request that this working paper be circulated as an official document of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of South Africa for his statement, and I give the floor to the next speaker on my list, the distinguished Ambassador of Belgium.

Mr. LINT (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, I would like, at the outset, to congratulate you on your accession to the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament and to commend you on the excellent work which you have accomplished. Please be assured that you may count on the full cooperation of my delegation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new colleagues from Australia and Japan.

My congratulations also go to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which, on 2 May 2002, acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines and thereby became the 123rd State to have ratified or acceded to the Convention.

There are other encouraging signs which we might note, pointing to the universalization of the Treaty. First, Cameroon is shortly to deposit its instruments of ratification; second, one of the first actions to be performed by East Timor, as a new independent State, will be to accede to the Convention; third, the interim Government of Afghanistan has announced its intention of acceding to the Convention and comparable positive signals are reaching us from other countries

(Mr. Lint, Belgium)

in all the continents; and, fourth, we also congratulate the Greek Parliament on its ratification in March 2002 and express the hope that the Turkish Parliament will be able to follow suit in the near future, as we have been informed in this forum by our Turkish colleague.

In this way, the States parties have set in motion a dynamic process leading towards universal adherence to and respect for the Convention. The next stage in this process will be the intersessional week, to be held at the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, from Monday 27 May to Friday 31 May 2002. I would like to invite you all to take part in this event.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Belgium for his statement. For the moment that concludes the list of speakers for our plenary today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? If not, before proceeding to my concluding remarks, I would like to give the floor briefly to the distinguished Ambassador of Sri Lanka for an announcement.

Mr. KARIYAWASAM (Sri Lanka): I would still want to continue, after the plenary is over, my informal consultations. I would also like to announce that, after the conclusion of today's informal consultations, I will have another round of consultations next Thursday.

The PRESIDENT: I would now like to conclude the presidency of Finland with the following short remarks.

Finland has now served for the first time as President of the Conference on Disarmament. It has been a great honour, and in many ways, a rewarding experience. We thank you, our team, both here and in Helsinki, for all your support, cooperation, encouragement, useful advice and professional assistance.

The main purpose of our efforts was to see if we could make a difference to past years in the light of the events of 11 September 2001. We thought that we had a common concern and a feeling of urgency for the sake of the Conference on Disarmament, its usefulness and credibility. We still think that these concerns are valid today. In addition to that, we saw that the continuing high-level bilateral dialogue was providing welcome impetus to our endeavours. We are today even more convinced that multilateral efforts and dialogue in the Conference on Disarmament are needed to strengthen the common understanding of where we are and where we are going.

We put forward some specific ideas in our letter on 28 March 2002 to all of you, and we have conducted extensive consultations on that basis. We recognize that those formulations were not final or ideal but in any case they served to engage us in dialogue and on a more focused and detailed basis. We were not asking the informal regional groups to take a stand on that. It was rather our preference that every individual delegation should carefully consider these suggestions. We have repeatedly said that every chair in this hall is the most responsible one in our endeavours. The initiation of work in the Conference on Disarmament this year is the paramount and common challenge. It is obvious that there are different - even very different - expectations as to the nature and intensity of our deliberations after a long time of inactivity. We understand that. For those reasons, we were ready to listen, and I think that the

(The President)

informal session was most useful. We listened to your comments, suggestions, and you see the latest version and our thinking in a draft decision which a representative of the secretariat is distributing to you as I speak.

In closing, let me remind you of what my Minister has pointed out: "New threats to international security make this year different from the previous year. The opening of a dialogue in the Conference on Disarmament would allow us to take a fresh look at the issues which the international community considers important, to meet the challenges of non-proliferation and disarmament in a new situation, and to continue shaping a common understanding of a safer world."

Let me now thank the previous presidents for this year, our colleagues from Egypt and Ethiopia, for their most valuable and courageous preparations for the Finnish presidency. Thank you all for your cooperation and help. To the interpreters: I did not have a text to copy for you, but I hope that my English speed is so slow that you have been able to keep pace with me anyway. I thank the representatives of the secretariat for their efficient assistance, and it remains to me to wish the next President, our esteemed friend and good colleague, Ambassador de La Fortelle, and his team all the best when they take over the gavel next week.

Ladies and gentlemen, the next plenary meeting will take place on Thursday, 30 May 2002, at 10 a.m. in this room.

The meeting rose at noon.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.903
30 May 2002

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND THIRD PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 30 May 2002, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Hubert de La Fortelle (France)

GE.02-62256 (E) 010702 020702

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I call to order the 903rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like, at the outset, to make some brief introductory comments on the occasion of France's assumption of the presidency of the Conference.

I would like first of all to take stock of the situation in which our Conference finds itself. I will then endeavour to list the causes for the current paralysis of our forum and, finally, I will give you some brief indications as to the intentions of the French presidency.

Before going to the heart of the matter, I should like first of all to thank all my predecessors who have successively occupied this post since the beginning of the 2002 session. The Egyptian Chargé d'affaires, Mr. Mohamed Tawfik, Ambassador Fisseha Yimer Aboye of Ethiopia and my colleague and friend Markku Reimaa, who has just passed the baton to me. Mr. Reimaa has done remarkable work in all respects: everything that could possibly have been tried has, in all probability, been undertaken both by him and by his predecessors. That, therefore, is my assessment of the situation.

The disarmament process is continuing. This can be seen in the recent and very impressive signing by the United States and the Russian Federation of a new treaty for the reduction of their strategic nuclear arsenals, which represents an important and positive step forward.

At the same time, it is no secret that the situation in this forum is hardly encouraging. Indeed, the problem we face is a double one and this raises the temptation to find ways of bypassing the Conference. This double problem is to be found, first of all, in the path of negotiation. What is too obvious often passes unnoticed or, as Saint-Exupéry puts it, the essential is invisible to the eye and people are loath to look closely at things that seem self-evident. The compromise formulae on the programme of work drafted by successive presidents since 1999 have all come to naught. In our current context the path of negotiation regrettably - but I hope only provisionally - appears to have led to an impasse.

The second problem relates to the path of dialogue. Experience accumulated by the previous presidency would seem to indicate that the so-called path of dialogue or discussion which could in the end lead to one or several rounds of negotiation does not seem to be acceptable to all. If neither of these paths leads anywhere, we will be faced with the temptation to bypass the Conference.

The more the Conference is touted as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, as stated in paragraph 120 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on disarmament, the more it is in fact bypassed. One after another of the issues which by rights should be dealt with in this forum either elude it or run the risk of eluding it, as if impelled by an irresistible centrifugal force. So are we doomed to failure? We do not believe so. What then are the causes of this situation? They clearly lie

(The President)

outside our forum. Although it is not my intention as President to analyse the current strategic environment, I would simply say that, more than in any other area of international relations, multilateral disarmament is directly dependent on day-to-day developments in the field of international security.

The profound strategic changes which we have been witnessing over the last few years are creating new uncertainties as to the conditions for future global balances. In this connection, even if the underlying reasons for these uncertainties should not blind us to numerous positive developments, the situation still does not seem particularly propitious for the emergence of an international consensus on the next stages to be followed in the multilateral disarmament process. Yet, such a consensus is indispensable for the relaunching of useful and substantive work by the Conference on Disarmament. Nothing could be further from the truth than to blame our present difficulties on some sort of ill will or lack of creativity on the part of the Geneva delegations. Quite the contrary: numerous paths have been explored since the beginning of the 1999 session in an attempt to break the deadlock; regrettably all to no avail.

Under the circumstances, it is clearly vital for us to preserve the Conference as an instrument for multilateral disarmament, an instrument which, without any doubt, will one day find itself in a better situation, provided we do not yield to the temptation of recreating elsewhere facilities that we already have here.

What then are the aims of the French presidency? They are clear and, I hope, a priori, limited, but are broadly contingent on ideas that might emerge from my consultations. My first aim is to continue consultations and continue to listen to delegations, to all delegations. I certainly do not intend - and this goes without saying - to start from scratch. We have already made some progress, we have a common heritage, to use the recent wording by the Ambassador of Chile, a common heritage that consists of official or unofficial proposals by my predecessors in this post.

Nor am I forgetting the most recent proposals, put forward by Ambassador Reimaa. I shall keep in mind this heritage as I continue the intensive consultations that I launched at the beginning of the week and which I shall be pursuing with all delegations in a spirit of total transparency. To disregard this indispensable foundation would be an unpardonable mistake. My second aim is to ensure that I do not discard any path that might prove promising.

From what I have said, it follows that I have no preconditions, no set ideas in terms of the task which faces me over the next four weeks. I will be listening to all of your proposals and suggestions, I will consult with you on those which appear to me to have promise and which might meet with broad approval. I undertake to keep you regularly informed, in particular every Thursday at our plenary meetings, but also in other forums, as to the state of progress of my consultations and to share with you my thoughts so as to ensure that there is no lack of clarity about the intentions of your President.

I am of course not forgetting the very useful work of the three special coordinators on questions of procedure, which, like my predecessors, I will continue fully to support.

(The President)

In conclusion, in these difficult times, of which we must remain ever mindful, let us endeavour to work together and give the lie to the words of the great French diplomat, Paul Cambon, foreign minister at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, who said that diplomacy is the art of struggling unsuccessfully against the force of things.

I would now like to call on those colleagues on the list of speakers, namely, for today, the representatives of Cuba and Brazil.

The representative of Cuba has the floor.

Mr. MORA GODOY (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, first of all I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to wish you every success in your efforts to extricate this body from the lamentable stalemate in which it finds itself. I would also like to commend the Ambassador of Finland on the work that he has accomplished during his term in his efforts to change the situation.

Mr. President, the paralysis of this important forum - the only multilateral body with a mandate to negotiate legally binding treaties in the sphere of disarmament and arms control - is most discouraging in the current circumstances, when the very essence of multilateralism is being seriously threatened by the hegemonic unilateral policy of one State which has arrogated to itself the role of master of the world.

To demonstrate this assertion, we need only review certain recent events in which the world's supreme military Power has taken the role of protagonist, namely, the scrapping of the ABM Treaty and progress in the deployment of a new antimissile defence system; the announcement that it will not ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty; the blocking of the process of international negotiations to conclude a protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention and the obstruction of the unanimous wish of the States parties to that Convention to continue their multilateral efforts aimed at strengthening it; and, finally, the unprecedented pressure and blackmail used to depose the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, rejecting all methods based on dialogue and cooperation and placing the Organization in a very delicate political situation immediately prior to the Convention's first review conference.

It is paradoxical that now, when the antagonisms that characterized the cold war no longer exist, we should be witnessing such serious setbacks in the sphere of disarmament and international security, setbacks of an order that we did not see even in the years that preceded the 1990s.

The United States has inherited advantageous conditions from the outcome of that period and it would have increased its prestige and respect in the eyes of all the peoples of the world had it favoured and fostered the hopes that arose in the early 1990s, when the total elimination of

(Mr. Mora Godoy, Cuba)

weapons of mass destruction and rapid progress towards the ideal of total and complete disarmament under strict international control were beginning to be seen as achievable goals in a shorter time frame. Those auspicious prospects have now faded and, instead, we have the feeling today that we are in an even worse situation, one characterized by threats, wars, unilateral actions and attempts to modify the approaches that gave rise to the international legal order in the field of disarmament and arms control.

The United States has been quick to produce lists of supposed violators of the international disarmament agreements, using the international campaign against terrorism and the speculative linking of its imaginary sponsors and perpetrators with ambitions to develop or acquire weapons of mass destruction as a pretext to justify the threat of -and the resort to - armed aggression, even going so far as to prepare a list of possible United States "nuclear targets".

In this crusade the United States Government has resorted once again to its mendacious accusation that Cuba is carrying out at least limited offensive work in the research and development of biological warfare and that it has provided dual-use technology to other States, described by the United States as "rogue States".

I will not waste time commenting on the term "rogue", used by the White House apparently to denigrate those countries that do not fall in with its designs. Instead I shall concentrate on the false accusation relating to biological weapons, and I shall do so by quoting verbatim some paragraphs of the statement made by the President of the Councils of State and of Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, Dr. Fidel Castro, on 10 May in response to the lies that had been uttered four days earlier by the United States Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, Mr. John Bolton. The full text of the statement is to be found in a document that we have requested be circulated at this Conference. Our President said, and I quote:

> "The Acts of Terrorism Act passed by the National Assembly of Cuba stipulates, in its article 10: 'Anyone who manufactures, facilitates, sells, transports, transfers, introduces into the country or keeps in his or her possession, under any form or in any place [...] chemical or biological agents, or any other substance from which any product that fits this description can be derived through research, design or a combination thereof' shall be liable to penalties of between 10 and 30 years privation of liberty, life imprisonment or death.
>
> "If Cuban scientists from any of our biotechnology institutes had been cooperating with any country in the development of biological weapons, or had tried to create such weapons on their own initiative they would immediately be hauled before a court of justice on a charge of treason.

(Mr. Mora Godoy, Cuba)

"In an official, public letter, Cuba has written to the Government of the United States to propose three major draft agreements, which are of greater benefit to the United States than to Cuba itself, given the very different magnitude of the problems in each of the two countries. The first is a draft agreement on immigration issues; the second, a draft agreement on cooperation in controlling the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; and the third, a draft bilateral cooperation programme to combat terrorism. We have not received any reply.

"We are urged to cease any biological weapons-related cooperation with 'rogue' States and to comply with all our obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention. Which is the international organization that decides whether or not a country is a 'rogue' State? Precisely which rule of the Biological Weapons Convention has Cuba violated? Is it that, on top of the criminal blockade, they would now ban us from marketing our medicines and using the most beneficial, the most noble products of the talents and hard work of our scientists, they would prevent us from placing these at the service of the health of people anywhere in the world? Or could it be that the United States Government is seeking another bilateral agreement, in addition to those proposed by Cuba, namely, on cooperation in efforts to combat the production of biological weapons? Please propose it. We would be happy to include it in our list of projects under consideration."

On 13 May, a mere few days after the false accusations by Mr. Bolton, the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Colin Powell, had to explain his subordinate's remarks and to reaffirm the real state of affairs, namely, that Cuba does not possess biological weapons.

Furthermore, the former President James Carter, who recently visited my country, stated during his visit to the Cuban Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology that, as part of the preparations for his visit to Cuba, he had held meetings with government institutions in the United States and even with the intelligence agencies and in those meetings - and I quote Mr. Carter - "there were absolutely no such allegations made or questions raised". Then he added, and I quote once again: "I asked them specifically, if there was any evidence that Cuba has been involved in sharing any information to any other country on Earth that could be used for terrorist purposes and the answer from our experts on intelligence was: no."

No further comment is needed. The Government of the United States has lied once again in connection with Cuba and it has been caught red-handed in its lie.

I will only add that the products and technologies of the Cuban biotechnology industry are available now in more than 40 countries. Agreements for technology transfers have been concluded or are currently being negotiated with 13 countries, namely: India, China, Brazil, Egypt, Malaysia, Iran, Russia, South Africa, Tunisia, Algeria, United Kingdom, Venezuela and Mexico, and new trade and production negotiations are under way with 10 countries: Malaysia, Netherlands, Spain, Brazil, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Mexico, Ukraine, Germany and the

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United States (in this last case, to be more precise, negotiations are under way on the use of the Cuban anti-meningitis vaccine and the first steps have been made towards possible clinical trials with the EGF vaccine for lung cancer). All the transfers are governed by a bilateral agreement stipulating that these technologies are to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Cuba goes around the world stating the truth, calling things by their name, but it also acts in a totally responsible manner, on the basis of strict moral and ethical principles. At the present time, when terrorism is one of humankind's main concerns, Cuba has expressed its firm rejection of that scourge and has taken every possible step to combat terrorism, including ratification of the 12 United Nations international treaties to combat terrorism and the adoption of a national anti-terrorism statute that includes severe penal measures.

A country which for years on end has supported and encouraged terrorist actions against Cuba organized from its territory does not have the moral right to level accusations against us: the Government of Cuba has in its possession and has demonstrated to the public irrefutable evidence of these assertions.

Cuba is a small country, a peaceful and hard-working country that represents no military danger to anyone and we reaffirm in this forum that it has no nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, whether good or bad, and that there are no persons in Cuba, whether responsible or irresponsible, who possess such weapons. The total elimination of weapons of mass destruction is the only viable solution to the threat which they represent as potential instruments of terrorist acts.

To achieve that goal, it is imperative to start negotiations on a multilateral legally binding treaty that stipulates their complete prohibition and destruction. Cuba actively supports this objective, which has been rejected by the United States.

It is also imperative to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention with a protocol that includes international transparent and non-discriminatory verification measures. Cuba supports this process and the United States opposes it. The United States has openly stated its reluctance to permit international verification of its biotechnological and pharmaceutical industry and its biological defence programmes, which are the most advanced in the world.

Cuba favours a broad approach in dealing with issues related to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in opposition to the narrow perceptions that take non-proliferation as their ultimate goal. Cuba considers that this broad approach should also be applied when dealing with the means of delivery of such weapons.

For Cuba, the issue of missiles should be viewed in all its aspects in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner, including the question of international cooperation in the peaceful use of outer space. The United Nations has an essential role to play in analysing and resolving the problem of missiles and, for this reason, Cuba has always supported the resolution on this issue which has been adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

(Mr. Mora Godoy, Cuba)

The Conference on Disarmament also has an important role to play in the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Year after year, the international community shows its determination to pursue this objective, through the adoption of a resolution on the issue in the United Nations General Assembly. Last year 156 countries voted in favour of that resolution and only 4 abstained, among them the United States.

In conclusion, I would like to draw attention to the extremely disquieting international scenario unfolding before our eyes, with very negative implications for the entire system of multilateral negotiations in the sphere of disarmament and arms control. We cannot remain indifferent to the real possibility that certain hegemonic Powers may act with total impunity and disregard for the will of the vast majority of the world's countries, taking drastic decisions outside multilateral forums and even spreading falsehoods throughout the world. It is the fundamental and collective responsibility of all States and, in particular, the members of this body to call a halt to activities of this kind.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of Cuba for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of Brazil.

Ms. VALLE PEREIRA (Brazil) (translated from French): Mr. President, at the outset allow me to congratulate you on your appointment as President of the Conference on Disarmament. The delegation of Brazil assures you of its full cooperation in the exercise of your important responsibilities, for under present circumstances yours is indeed a very difficult task and we wish you every success.

I have asked for the floor to provide certain clarifications on the position expressed by the delegation of Brazil during the informal consultations on 23 May 2002, relating to proposals by your predecessor, the distinguished Permanent Representative of Finland, Ambassador Markku Reimaa. At that time, I stated my delegation's support for Ambassador Reimaa's proposal in March 2001 that the Conference should consider the possible launching of work on an informal basis by the four ad hoc committees called for in document CD/1624. The initiative by Ambassador Reimaa was well balanced and did not favour any particular subject allocated to the various ad hoc committees over any other. The balanced nature of this proposal was also assured by the specific reference to document CD/1624, containing a declaration which stresses that the Conference on Disarmament is essentially a negotiating forum with sufficient constructive ambiguity to be able to protect the most diverse interests expressed by these committees in this forum. Although accepted by the Conference as a basis for consultations on the possible adoption of a work programme, the proposal nonetheless became a device for stalling the resumption of work by the Conference.

(Ms. Valle Pereira, Brazil)

It was the observation of this fact that enabled the delegation of Brazil, during these same informal consultations on 23 May, to indicate that it was ready to support the revised version of Ambassador Reimaa's proposal, which had been informally circulated, since it maintained this balance between the four subsidiary bodies. As soon as the formal meeting started, a third version was then circulated introducing significant changes to the two previous proposals and it was with regard to these that my delegation reserved the right to express its position, should the need arise.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Brazil for her statement and for the kinds words addressed to the Chair.

I believe that we have now exhausted the list of speakers. Is there any other delegation that wishes to take the floor? The representative of the United States has the floor.

Mr. McGINNIS (United States of America): Mr. President, I welcome you, my Government welcomes you, in your task, and we look forward to working closely with you and our colleagues during the next four weeks under your presidency.

I was not planning on speaking this morning, but I feel that I need to respond. I regret that our distinguished colleague from Cuba has felt it necessary to engage in a rather inflammatory statement and attack on the United States. In some ways it shows how difficult it is to carry on a dialogue when we use terms such as "lied once again", "a bunch of lies", etc.

I think that we are all here very anxious to get down to work and deal with the issues that face us, and, as we live at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we are faced with a world that is very different to that of the preceding century. It is up to us in this body to address threats that concern the security of the international community. In doing so, we do have to deal with the agreements that we have signed up to. From the position of the United States, compliance is extremely important. Those who sign up to an agreement should comply with it fully. The question of universality is also important, but what we want to do is engage in work and achieve a product that will have a result and that will make a difference to improving life and improving security in this planet. And that is extremely important.

Accordingly, one of the comments by our Cuban colleagues about weapons of mass destruction and terrorism is, I believe, well taken. We are very anxious about - and would like this body to deal with - the question of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. This is an issue that faces us. It is not the agenda of 1979. It is the agenda of 2002. So we would look forward to a fruitful, productive discussion on these issues, rather than engaging in political polemics.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

I now call on the Ambassador of Algeria, followed by the Ambassador of Cuba, who has again asked for the floor.

Mr. DEMBRI (Algeria) (translated from French): Mr. President, I too should like to congratulate you on your election as President of the Conference on Disarmament and to join my personal congratulations to those extended to your predecessor, Ambassador Markku Reimaa, who has clearly done his utmost to engender a working atmosphere and to mobilize all the members of the Conference on Disarmament.

In point of fact I had not prepared a statement this morning. I was intending to speak next week but, having listened to your statement, I believe it contains certain essential pointers to guide us in our collective thinking about the processes under way.

It is very clear that your presidency, Mr. President, is an important one. It is important because, if nothing happens over the next four weeks, the year 2002 will go down in our annals as an empty year, yet another year without work for the Conference on Disarmament. This is something we should already be thinking about.

You are also the representative of a country that forms part of what is customarily called the P5. Thus your responsibilities go somewhat beyond the gathering of views; they also extend to the need to get things rolling again so we can at least get started on the programme of work. This is a particular responsibility of the P5 and one of which its members must be aware. In any event it is up to them to introduce the sort of elements that could help us move forward out of this deadlock.

You yourself have drawn up a balance sheet and given your view of the deadlock in which we find ourselves, while stressing that negotiation and dialogue have become firmly established, even if they have not brought the desired results. We need to deal with the issue of our common heritage, to borrow the formula applied by our Chilean colleague, Juan Enrique Vega. We might say that we are engaged here in a process of conducting our deliberations together, rather than just being next to one another or opposing one another. We need to have this esprit de corps, this positive attitude of dialogue and negotiation, quite simply because - and this needs to be recalled again and again - the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral negotiating forum which the international community was willing to establish.

Where, then, does that leave us today? I believe that there have been elements of progress that have been taken on board by the international community whenever we have had negotiations and dialogue. Need I recall that the NPT has now become universal or very close to universal? Need I recall that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is now a reality? That all the agreements which we have reached on biological and chemical weapons are also a reality? That treaty-based nuclear-free zones in Latin America and Africa are now a reality?

Let us recall too that, generally speaking, the Conference on Disarmament has always followed a positive approach in this process because it has stuck to a code of conduct, and the code of conduct that has prevailed was, first and foremost, the universal nature of nuclear disarmament. I believe we all agree on that: it has been shown in the past and will remain true until the contrary is proved that we need to subordinate our national needs to the will of the international community and to scrutiny by the international community.

(Mr. Dembri, Algeria)

This is the price to be paid if we wish to avoid deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament. This is the price to be paid if we are to combat certain rules of silence. How is it, for example, that until now there has been no organized thinking or clear guidance on the issue of the nuclear potential of Israel? A law of silence has been applied here, a law which is simply unacceptable and intolerable for the international community. Thus, wherever we have respected this principle the international situation has been taken into account in the work of the Conference of Disarmament and has not impeded that work. The situation is clearly quite different today, however. For example, in dealing with terrorism after the events of 11 September we need to apply the rules of universal solidarity and we are doing so.

We are applying those rules with vigour, while recalling that the phenomenon of terrorism has existed for years and that this solidarity has not always been in evidence. I am speaking first of all about my own country, which for some 15 years has been exposed to this phenomenon of terrorism and whose calls have gone unheeded. I could also cite the case of Egypt: everybody recalls the incident at Luxor. Nor should we overlook the countries of the North: thus, in Germany there was the Baader-Meinhof gang and in France Action directe, in Italy the Red Brigades, and in Japan groups whose names, I am sure, the distinguished representative of Japan will know. Thus our reflections on terrorism today must take into account all these elements because, if non-State entities have become a danger in our world and if they are also to get their hands on weapons of mass destruction, they can only do so from States which possess nuclear weapons and not from States that do not. I believe that this too is a reality that needs to be borne in mind in our solidarity against terrorism.

That is why, Mr. President, my delegation wished nonetheless to sound some notes of concern. Since the rules of diplomacy require - as you have said yourself, Mr. President - that at a certain point we should work with constructive ambiguity, I hope that thanks to your consummate skills we may perhaps arrive at some proposals that help us break the deadlock. For the time being, however, we must regard as a cause of concern the fact that the CTBT has not yet come into force and to consider why this is so.

We also need to ascertain whether, if Russia and the United States have agreed to reduce their nuclear arsenals, this means that we are now facing a qualitatively new approach, namely, a doctrine of deterrence, rather than the destruction and total elimination of nuclear arsenals. Given that these agreements will also now come before the Conference on Disarmament, we must therefore not lose sight of the fact that our objective remains nuclear disarmament and total nuclear disarmament.

We would also like to know why there is talk again of nuclear tests and why we are hearing references to a new generation of nuclear weapons, including mini-nuclear bombs. These are not the handiwork of non-nuclear-weapon States, so they must come from somewhere else: once again we need explanations. In any event we are waiting for clear statements on this issue so that the principles guiding our work can be equally clear. Otherwise it is obvious that this situation will imperil the credibility of the NPT and, with the revision of the nuclear posture,

(Mr. Dembri, Algeria)

the risk of vertical and horizontal proliferation will be reasserted. These, therefore, are causes of concern which we, as non-nuclear States, share and which we clearly wish the Conference on Disarmament to take on board.

Solemn commitments were entered into by the nuclear States at the NPT review conference. In 2002, two years down the road, we are faced - to our great regret - by a clear refusal to move towards the elimination of nuclear arsenals. Why?

We would like to have a reply to this question. And we would also like an explanation for the refusal to conclude a legally binding agreement on the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States. This is one of the most recent positions expressed in New York and it is a position which leaves us non-nuclear States or States which have renounced nuclear weapons feeling disoriented. For these reasons we seek clear explanations from those countries and we would like to know how their doctrine is expected to evolve, so that we are able today to apply ourselves with vigour and to come up with a programme of work.

These, Mr. President, are a few ideas that I wished to share with you as possible food for thought as you embark on your own presidency. It perhaps goes without saying, once again, that we are looking to the French presidency - that is, to France as a member country of the nuclear club - to provide a contribution which will genuinely move us towards the relaunching of our work.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of Algeria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I understand that the Ambassador of Cuba has requested the floor. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. MORA GODOY (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Thank you, Mr. President. I regret that I have to take the floor again, but since we believe in the validity and the relevance of this forum as the appropriate multilateral forum for addressing matters relating to disarmament and arms control I feel it necessary to refer to the statement which we have just heard from the distinguished representative of the United States.

According to my notes, he asserted that it was difficult to establish cooperation when people came here with inflammatory statements, using words such as "fabrications", "lies", etc.

Mr. President, let us be clear here about who is casting the first stone. The reality is that, on 6 May 2002 - in other words, a mere few days ago - Cuba was accused of developing a biological weapons programme. Do we not even have the right to say that this is a lie? We are told that we made an inflammatory statement. No: it was not an inflammatory statement; all we were doing was stating the truth and if that is seen as justification for not cooperating, for not developing an attitude of decency and good conduct, as Cuba has done on this question of biological weapons, then we are really unable to agree that there is a genuine desire for cooperation on this matter.

(Mr. Mora Godoy, Cuba)

I would merely like to draw attention to something else that I have noted from what has been said, namely, the willingness to cooperate, to embark on a dialogue and to negotiate the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and I believe that "no comma" was added after the word terrorism.

I wonder, therefore, why we cannot start dealing with the question of nuclear disarmament? Let us start with that, an issue which is of concern to the entire world.

We too take note of the statements regarding the possibility of cooperation on these matters and we too are prepared - as of course we have always been - to continue cooperating and working in this Conference on Disarmament and in any other forum, even a bilateral one.

The technology that Cuba is able to transfer in this context is the technology of transparency, of always stating the truth, of decency. This technology is provided entirely free of charge.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of Cuba for his statement. Do any other delegations wish to speak at this stage? I see none. In that case, we have completed our work for today. Before adjourning the meeting, however, I would like to remind you that the special coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, Mr. Kariyawasam, will be holding informal consultations as he did last week, immediately after this plenary. These will be open to all and will relate to the question with which he has been entrusted.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be on Thursday, 6 June 2002, at 10 a.m. and, once again, will be followed by informal open-ended consultations, organized by the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, as the special coordinator on the review of the agenda of the Conference.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.904
6 June 2002

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 6 June 2002, at 10.25 a.m.

President: Mr. Hubert de la Fortelle (France)

GE.02-62263 (E) 250602 260602

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I call to order the 904th plenary session of the Conference on Disarmament. To the best of my knowledge, there are no speakers on the list for today. I would like to ask if any delegation wishes to take the floor? I see none.

In that event, I would like briefly to review the situation reached by the Conference during the current presidency. As we approach the end of the second week of our presidency, I would like today, in the interests of transparency, to take stock of the situation, as I undertook to do in my introductory statement at last week's plenary, on 30 May 2002.

I have continued with my programme of bilateral consultations with delegations. To date, I have been able to meet some 30 delegations and I will meet a number more this afternoon. They have conveyed to me their concerns, their ideas and their assessments of the situation in which we find ourselves today. These contacts have been very useful and very informative and I have been able to learn a great deal.

While all delegations agree in regretting that the Conference is caught in an impasse of a more or less structural nature, I have yet to detect any sufficiently extensive common ground between us which would enable us to reach consensus on the best way of relaunching the work of the Conference on Disarmament. I sense a difference in sensitivity between, on the one hand, those who wish our Conference to remain faithful to its vocation as a negotiating forum and not to depart from it, lest it become nothing more than a talking shop and, on the other hand, those whose priority is to get the Conference back to work as soon as possible in a spirit of pragmatism and creativity, by devising reasonably flexible forms of dialogue. That view, I would say, is one shared by a considerable majority of the delegations to whom I have spoken thus far. Accordingly, I am continuing to explore all possible avenues that might lead to the opening of such dialogue.

I have taken note, with interest, of the proposal made by the delegation of India during the informal consultations conducted last week by the Ambassador of Sri Lanka.

In order to avoid any hiatus between the French presidency and the German presidency, which will follow it in the last week of the second half of the 2002 session and will then continue during the last three weeks of August, I have decided to keep Ambassador Heinsberg closely informed about the state of my consultations. This initiative, albeit modest, should mean that the work of our presidency will not be interrupted and, I hope, that the incoming German presidency will not have to start from scratch.

That therefrom is the situation today, 6 June 2002, and I would like to conclude by saying that in these difficult times - times which remain difficult - we should heed the urgings of Antonio Gramsci and endeavour to reconcile the pessimism of the intellect with the optimism of the will.

(The President)

Does any delegation wish to respond to my statement or to take the floor at this stage? I see none and that, accordingly, concludes our work for today.

Before I adjourn the meeting, however, I would like to remind you that the special coordinator on the review of the agenda of the Conference, Ambassador Chung of the Republic of Korea, will be holding informal consultations on the issue under his responsibility immediately after this plenary and that these consultations will of course be open to you all.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 13 June 2002, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.905
13 June 2002

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 13 June 2002, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Hubert de La Fortelle (France)

GE.02-62270 (E) 240602 100702

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I call to order the 905th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. At the outset, on behalf of the Conference, I would like warmly to welcome the new representative of Austria to our midst, Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch, and to assure him of our cooperation and our support in the exercise of his duties. If he wishes to take the floor I am happy to call on him.

Mr. PETRITSCH (Austria): Thank you for your kind words of welcome. As I am taking the floor for the first time, I would just like to assure you of my full support and the full support of my delegation. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze on his assumption of the position of Secretary-General of this Conference.

As I have already indicated, I am not making any comments today except to stress Austria's great concern about the continuing stalemate. Let me just say in closing that I look forward to working with you and your colleagues in endeavouring to overcome this sorry state of affairs and to get back to substantive work.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): Next on my list of speakers for today I have the representatives of Kazakhstan, Morocco and the Netherlands. I now call on the representative of Kazakhstan, Ambassador Nurlan Danenov.

Mr. DANENOV (Kazakhstan) (translated from French): Mr. President, as this is my first statement at the Conference on Disarmament under your presidency I would like, first of all, on behalf of the delegation of Kazakhstan, to congratulate you on your accession to this important post. Our delegation believes that under your wise guidance the Conference will be able to catch its breath again, so to speak, to overcome all difficulties, and to make effective progress. I can assure you of our support for all your efforts.

(continued in Russian)

Mr. President, dear colleagues, my statement today has just one goal: briefly to inform you of the holding on 4 June 2002, in Almaty, of the first summit of States parties of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), a major event not only in the history of Kazakhstan but in the entire region as a whole, and of the documents adopted at the summit by such countries as Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Turkey and others.

The idea of CICA was first put forward by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbaev, at the forty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly in October 1992. The gist of the Kazakhstan initiative is the creation of an effective mechanism for preventive diplomacy in Asia and the development of a new system of relations of States in this vast region designed to ensure security and stability on the Asian continent.

(Mr. Danenov, Kazakhstan)

This summit showed that a new political process is emerging in the life of the vast Asian continent, in the form of the CICA forum, whose vocation it is to expand the potential for multilateral dialogue among Asian countries and for their interaction as equals, with a view to strengthening security and stability and developing a climate of trust and cooperation.

Any regional security system based on the principles of guaranteed territorial integrity, respect for the sovereignty of States members of the process and non-interference in internal affairs, as well as on the understanding that the negotiating process is the sole basis for settling conflicts and crises, is in keeping with the fundamental principles of global security. It is precisely these principles that are reflected in the adoption of the Almaty Act and the summit's declaration on the eradication of terrorism and the promotion of dialogue among civilizations, which we intend to circulate as official documents of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Almaty Act calls for a number of undertakings to be carried out in parallel. These include the implementation of confidence-building measures and the settlement of disputes, the development of an inventory of confidence-building measures, giving priority attention to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, the creation in Asia of nuclear-free zones and the adoption of obligations relating to the combating of terrorism and separatism. In the summit's declaration, which stands as the reaction of our countries to the challenges of terrorism and extremism, we have developed a common position against that evil. The leaders of the States participating in the summit stressed the need to support and develop dialogue among civilizations as one of the crucial means of eradicating terrorism and preventing conflicts between various peoples and countries.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of Kazakhstan for his statement and I now call on the distinguished representative of Morocco, Ambassador Omar Hilale.

Mr. HILALE (Morocco) (translated from French): Mr. President, I am pleased to be able to present to you my sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of this important negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation congratulates you on two counts. First, you represent France, a friendly country with which my country maintains historic, close and very special ties at all levels and, second, your qualities as a seasoned ambassador, your diplomatic acumen and your fine judgement, coupled with your great experience, are all portends of a successful presidency.

May I also pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Markku Reimaa of Finland, for the imagination and untiring energy which he brought to bear on the task of forging consensus on a programme of work for our Conference. Similarly I would like to extend my congratulations to Mr. Mohammed Tawfik of Egypt and to Ambassador Fisseha Yimer of Ethiopia.

(Mr. Hilale, Morocco)

I must also congratulate Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze on his appointment as Secretary-General of our Conference, Mr. Román-Morey, the Deputy Secretary-General, and the Conference secretariat and convey my admiration and respect for their dedication.

Finally I would like to say how honoured and happy I am to be back with the Conference on Disarmament after having had the privilege of participating in its work 10 years ago. I also take this opportunity to thank my colleagues for their kind words of welcome and to tell them how much I look forward to working with them in our joint endeavour to achieve the objectives of our Conference.

In my turn, I also share the pleasant duty of extending a warm welcome to our new colleagues, my friend Michael Smith of Australia, Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi of Japan and Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch of Austria, and to say how much their contribution will be valued in our Conference.

The tragic and abominable events of 11 September made clear how international security and the security of our countries are so very fragile. They also underscored the urgent need to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime, as well as the multilateral approach advocated up to now in considering issues related to international security and disarmament.

The responsibility that we have today is to find the right answers to these new challenges, to the fears and concerns of the international community. Effective implementation of the provisions of international treaties, international cooperation and strengthened multilateralism are essential elements in the building of a better world, a world of peace and security for all. To this end, the international community is called on to display political determination, solidarity and collective commitment.

The Conference on Disarmament has a paramount role to play in meeting the challenges of the third millennium. Its mission as the sole United Nations multilateral negotiating body on disarmament remains as valid and vital as ever. While we should not underestimate its current stalemate, there can be no long-term vision without an equal admixture of dreams and realism. These are not just pious sentiments: the Conference on Disarmament must fulfil its mandate as a negotiating forum, characterized by constructive and substantial dialogue.

A new page was written in the history of disarmament in Moscow on 14 May, with the signature by President Bush and President Putin of a disarmament treaty replacing the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and committing Russia and the United States of America to reducing their nuclear warheads from 6,000 to a range of 1,700-2,000. This treaty marks a clear break from the traditional approach to arms control, in that it concedes to both parties the right to make reductions at their own speed, to suspend them or even to resume and strengthen them, to withdraw from the treaty or to rejoin it as they see fit.

(Mr. Hilale, Morocco)

Despite its imperfections, the Treaty nevertheless represents an important and promising step forward on the path which is so dear to us, namely, towards the goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons from our planet. It has the additional merit of giving fresh impetus to the disarmament process after so many years of stagnation. The alternative would be to maintain the current status quo, with the risks inherent in the retention of so many nuclear warheads. It is for that reason that Morocco welcomes this agreement, while hoping that the symmetry thus created, as well as the new partnership between Russia and NATO, will strengthen mutual trust and usher in new stages in this steady progression towards arms control. As our ultimate goal is to prevent nuclear proliferation and to arrive at the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, any agreement, however modest, is an important milestone in the building of a world free from nuclear menace.

In its capacity as a State party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Kingdom of Morocco subscribes fully to the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agreed to at the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995, which established the responsibility of nuclear Powers to report on their efforts to ensure the gradual elimination of their nuclear arsenals. The sixth Review Conference of NPT, held in May 2000, made considerable progress in the area of nuclear disarmament, with the adoption by consensus of the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals and to conduct a series of practical measures for the full implementation of the Treaty and of the 1995 principles and objectives.

In this context the Kingdom of Morocco keenly favours the establishment, within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, of a committee on nuclear disarmament with a negotiating mandate for the elimination of all nuclear weapons. In the absence of such negotiating mandate, however, Morocco is prepared to support any formula propitious to the substantial consideration of specific nuclear disarmament measures, in accordance with the objectives set out by the sixth Review Conference of NPT.

Similarly, Morocco considers that the establishment of a committee to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty is more necessary than ever, particularly in the aftermath of 11 September. It is clear that such a treaty would be an essential contribution both to international security and to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, provided that it was not discriminatory in nature and preserved the right of all countries to have access to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

True to its commitment to the cause of general and complete disarmament, Morocco has just enacted a series of measures in implementation of its strategic decision to work towards the prohibition of all categories of weapons of mass destruction and the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime. In this context, I am pleased to be able to announce my country's ratification on 1 March 2002 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction. Similarly, the Kingdom of Morocco, which unreservedly adheres to the principle of the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, and in particular nuclear weapons, has ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and is committed to implementation of the international monitoring system under the Treaty. It is in that spirit that we reiterate our appeal to all States which have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty.

(Mr. Hilale, Morocco)

Furthermore, on 19 March 2002 the Moroccan Government subscribed to the provisions of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and to three of its protocols, including the amended Protocol on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of mines, booby traps and other devices. Through this ratification Morocco aimed to express its determination to contribute to the effort by the international community to eradicate the scourge of these inhumane weapons.

At a time when new challenges loom over our world, the response by the international community should include efforts to strengthen and enhance the international non-proliferation regime through the strict and non-selective implementation of all the provisions to be found in the various treaties aimed at disarmament and arms control. More than ever our Conference needs less Platonic discourse and more political flexibility, wisdom and determination so that it does not turn into a mere talking shop. This objective can only be attained through the strengthening of multilateralism, which, in its dimension of disarmament and the strengthening of international peace and security, finds its very embodiment in our Conference. It is our hope that all the members of the Conference might share this vision, so that this forum can fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the international community, a mandate reaffirmed emphatically by a unanimous United Nations General Assembly in the aftermath of the outrages of 11 September.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of Morocco for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Chris Sanders.

Mr. SANDERS (Netherlands): As this is the first time that I take the floor during your presidency, Mr. President, let me congratulate you and let me assure you that we have the fullest confidence in the French leadership to bring this Conference to fruition.

Last Friday, 7 June 2002, the Netherlands organized an open-ended informal meeting on the issue of banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

The total number of participants at this meeting was well over 100. Over 40 countries attended this meeting as well as representatives from non-governmental organizations, some international organizations, and IAEA in Vienna.

In his presentation, Dr. Barnaby, a well-known nuclear physicist and former Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), outlined the need for such a treaty. The CTBT - apart from being an efficient non-proliferation instrument - sets a qualitative limit on the development of nuclear weapons. The treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices will set a quantitative limit on the production of fissile material. It therefore will be an important contribution towards non-proliferation and an essential next step towards nuclear disarmament. It will also contribute to reducing the risks of nuclear terrorism.

(Mr. Sanders, Netherlands)

The discussion after Dr. Barnaby's presentation highlighted the need for a better understanding of the subject. Issues raised in the discussion included the risks of proliferation of plutonium and highly enriched uranium, the physical protection of fissile material stocks, reprocessing, MOXing, semi-military uses like naval propulsion, nuclear terrorism and the feasibility of producing so-called "dirty bombs" from highly enriched uranium.

Participants encouraged my delegation to continue this exercise. My delegation intends to organize the next substantial meeting in this exercise at the same time in mid-September. We will keep you informed.

For the information of all delegations, I would like to ask the secretariat of the Conference to circulate a letter to which the statement of Dr. Barnaby, as well as my non-paper on the exercise, are attached.

We will keep the Conference informed about the further development of this exercise, which received widespread support and is considered to be a most useful activity in promoting the cause of such a treaty.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Chris Sanders, the representative of the Netherlands, for his statement. With that statement, we have come to the end of the list of speakers. If there are no other delegations wishing to take the floor, I shall now conclude with a few words on the progress in my consultations since last Thursday.

With only one week left before the end of the French presidency, time is running out and the term of office is too short. True to the initial commitment which I gave at the outset of this presidency, I would now like to share with you a few ideas which have been inspired in me today by my bilateral consultations with more than 40 - even as many as 50 - delegations and by my meetings with groups or with their coordinators.

I should warn you that these ideas are not entirely optimistic. To be brief, as General de Gaulle's foreign minister, Mr. Couve de Murville, a man whom I knew briefly at the outset of my career, always instructed his staff, my feelings could be summed up in two words: frustration and perseverance.

First, frustration: I refer not so much to my own frustration as to that of all the colleagues to whom I have spoken. Most of these colleagues are surprised at the lack of action and the paralysis afflicting our Conference. While fully appreciating the impact which the international strategic context has on its ability to function, as recalled by some speakers this morning, colleagues are both incredulous and even exasperated at what, in another context, Milton Friedman calls the tyranny of the status quo, at its inability to move. Why should it be impossible to engage in dialogue, including to agree to disagree, as I recall used to be the case in our forum during the cold war? At that time we did at least have dialogue.

(The President)

After frustration - perseverance: a more agreeable and more positive term. To date, I have gleaned a number of suggestions, some very modest, others more ambitious, but still fairly modest, which I am continuing to sound out with all delegations, including those playing a key role and with whom I am constantly in touch. Even if the resources of imagination and creativity in the area of arms control and disarmament are not unlimited, as they could be in the area of art, I have left no path unexplored. You know the saying: "Impossible n'est pas français". This is why my staff and I have decided to continue our consultations until the very end of the French presidency, lest we miss even the slightest chance, as tiny as it might be, to agree on a minimum threshold which would lead to a new start, a turnaround, brought to us from elsewhere. For this is something we wish for with all our hearts and that will enable us to agree on a programme of work.

In this context I take note with interest of the new Chinese proposal on space which was conveyed to us yesterday at the presidential consultations.

At this point, may I add that it is a good idea for new or improved proposals to be submitted to the Conference by those who are in a position to do so and that member States should respond to those proposals.

In conclusion I call upon you all in these difficult times - both for delegations and, above all, for our Conference, to whose continued well-being we are all so committed, to follow the advice so succinctly offered in the seventeenth century by the French mathematician, physicist and - in particular - philosopher, Blaise Pascal, in his aphorism: "Let us avoid two excesses, to exclude reason and to admit only reason."

Even though there may be no comments from the floor, I still put the question to you. That concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held next Thursday, 20 June 2002, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.906
20 June 2002

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 20 June 2002, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Hubert de La Fortelle (France)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 906th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. On my list of speakers for today I have the representative of Australia, Ambassador Michael Smith.

Mr. SMITH (Australia): Mr. President, let me begin by congratulating you on the way in which you have conducted your presidency - you have been energetic, yet measured, in your management of the Conference; you have shown creativity and perseverance in your consultations with us; you have tempered your enthusiasm and impatience for progress with humour and a good sense of the political realities with which we are dealing. In short, should I remain here long enough myself to progress around this room to your position, I will certainly cast my mind back to these early days in my time and do my best to emulate your calm, sensible and gracious approach.

This is the first occasion that I have had the privilege to address this Conference and I do so with a strong sense of the weight of negotiating history that is wrapped in these walls. Australia has always played an active roll in this body. That has not been due to any misplaced sense of national self-importance. It has been because Australians have fought and died in many wars, and our community, notwithstanding the fact that no war has been fought on our soil, has a deeply-rooted sense of the pain, dislocation and destruction that flows from conventional warfare. We firmly believe that there is a better way - that through negotiations leading to the establishment of global legal norms, collectively we can discourage and even head off some otherwise inevitable conflicts.

In this respect Australians are particularly conscious of the enormous potential for human suffering and devastation locked up in nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological weapons technology. It is because of this that we have worked here with your and so many of your national colleagues over the years on the drafting of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, on the Chemical Weapons Convention, on the Comprehensive Tests-Ban Treaty and on a number of other instruments. Many of these have come into effect and are working silently to deter the development and deployment of weapons of mass destruction; others are yet to achieve their full potential.

I was aware, of course, before my arrival here that this Conference was locked in a stalemate that was preventing it from addressing its work. What has particularly struck me since I arrived six weeks ago is the incredible pool of diplomatic talent that is gathered here poised to work and therefore, what a waste it is that we can do nothing. The more so in the light of the terrorist attacks on 11 September and their aftermath. The average man or woman in our countries would be entitled to ask, why are we, the specialist body in the United Nations system entrusted with developing multilateral legal responses to security challenges, doing nothing about it?

Rather than repeating the answer that we all know, I would like to set out what my Government thinks we should be doing and what I hope we can achieve during my tour of duty, in any event, in Geneva, not only in the Conference on Disarmament but in other multilateral forums here in Geneva and even elsewhere.

(Mr. Smith, Australia)

A fissile material cut-off treaty has been endorsed repeatedly as the logical next step on the nuclear arms control and disarmament agenda and it is our firm hope that the Conference on Disarmament will make any early start on negotiations on an FMCT. The most powerful barrier to nuclear weapons proliferation is the difficulty of acquiring sufficient quantities of weapons-useable nuclear material. An FMCT would tighten international controls on fissile material, further raising the bar to proliferation. And recent tensions in south Asia are a reminder of the potential that a cut-off treaty has to play an important security and confidence-building role in regions of tension, most particularly in south Asia and the Middle East

Until there is a start to formal negotiations, and without in any way supplanting the rightful role of the Conference on Disarmament as the negotiating forum, Australia sees value in further informal work in Geneva on FMCT issues, building on the workshops and seminars held last year. We very much welcome the Netherlands initiative for a structured series of FMCT seminars, the first of which took place on 7 June 2002. We regard the seminars as making a valuable contribution to an understanding of the important role that an FMCT would play in promoting nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and strongly encourage wide participation by delegations in them.

Australia also encourages all Conference on Disarmament delegations to consider other measures that could be taken to support the FMCT. In particular, we urge relevant States to join a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Our efforts in the Conference on Disarmament need to be complemented by other multilateral, plurilateral, regional and bilateral processes to promote arms control and disarmament goals.

The NPT remains essential to international efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, facilitate access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and advance nuclear disarmament. We were encouraged by the strong commitment to the NPT evident at the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference in New York in April. We look to all NPT parties to continue to bring to the review process a spirit of constructive cooperation consistent with our shared interests in maintaining and strengthening this vital treaty. Geneva, of course, will host the 2003 meeting of the Preparatory Committee. There is a special onus on delegations in Geneva therefore to assist the Chair, Ambassador Molnar, with preparations for the 2003 meeting.

Australia continues to work energetically with other countries to achieve a complete ban on nuclear tests for all time through the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We are aware that concerns have been expressed about the prospects for the Treaty's entry into force. We note however that with 165 signatories and 93 ratifications the Treaty has firmly established itself as a powerful international norm against nuclear explosive testing.

(Mr. Smith, Australia)

Furthermore, it has secured this support within a remarkably short time frame - less than six years. Nevertheless, until our goal of CTBT entry into force is achieved, we would urge all countries to maintain the existing moratorium on nuclear-testing and support development of the CTBT international monitoring system.

Australia will continue working vigorously for the universal application of the Additional Protocol on strengthened IAEA safeguards. We regard global application of the Additional Protocol as an essential reinforcing step for facilitating nuclear disarmament. We urge those yet to conclude an Additional Protocol to do so as quickly as possible.

The Biological Weapons Convention is another cornerstone of the multilateral disarmament system but it has faced serious challenges in the last 12 months. More than six months have passed since the Fifth Review Conference of this Convention was suspended. It remains nonetheless the best means that the international community has for preventing and addressing the proliferation of biological weapons. But it remains insufficient. We do not have adequate means for promoting effective implementation of the Convention, nor for clarifying suspicions of non-compliance. Technological development is rapidly expanding the scope not only for peaceful applications of biotechnology but also for ever more dangerous biological weapons. Regulatory controls over access to pathogens in most countries remain inadequate. For these reasons and others, the BWC needs to be strengthened. A variety of practical proposals for doing that were put before the Conference last year and promising means of continuing that work received wide endorsement.

Our highest priority for the resumed BWC Review Conference in November is ensuring a substantive conclusion that advances international efforts against biological weapons and provides security benefits to us all. In our view, as an indispensable part of that conclusion, States parties must agree to hold more frequent meetings so as to improve the implementation of the Convention, reinforce compliance and strengthen accountability.

Preventing the proliferation of ballistic missiles, which can serve as potential delivery vehicles for weapons of mass destruction, is another Australian priority. We are encouraged by progress towards the finalization of the draft international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation.

We should remember that the uncontrolled spread and indiscriminate use of conventional arms can also have a devastating humanitarian impact, threatening security and development. For this reason, Australia remains strongly committed to the universalization of the Ottawa Convention and to promoting the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, adopted in New York in July last year.

(Mr. Smith, Australia)

My predecessor, Les Luck, had the privilege of serving as President of the Second Review Conference of the CCW held in December 2001. My Government remains committed to the expert group process, which was established at that meeting to consider further steps that might be taken to reduce the impact of the explosive remnants of war and anti-vehicle mines. Australia hopes that agreement can be reached on practical measures that reduce the effects of these weapons on civilians.

I am conscious that that is an intimidating list of activities but I think we need to be ambitious if we are to make this body and the negotiating skills it contains fulfil their potential. I can assure you, Mr. President, that I and my delegation, at the very least, remain firmly committed to a strong, relevant and dynamic Conference on Disarmament and we urge all member States to strive for the necessary compromises to allow the Conference to get back to work.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Australia, Ambassador Michael Smith, for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair and I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. DUQUE ESTRADA MEYER (Brazil) (translated from French): Mr. President, as the French presidency draws to its close, the delegation of Brazil would like to extend its sincere congratulations to you on the efforts you have made to bring the Conference out of the deadlock that it has been in for nearly four years now. The delegation of Brazil shares the feeling of frustration to which you referred last week. We regret the paralysis and lack of action that has afflicted the Conference and we also wonder why it should be impossible for us to get to work.

As you also quite rightly pointed out last week, we must persevere, despite our frustration. Even if the scope for imagination and creativity might be somewhat limited in the field of disarmament, the delegation of Brazil has always been convinced that, when it comes to getting the work of the Conference going again, we have not exhausted our full potential.

In the spirit of transparency, you have organized consultations which have confirmed that this feeling is well-founded. To borrow your own words, an important turning point has been reached under your presidency. The delegation of Brazil welcomes with satisfaction the new proposal submitted by the delegation of China. Following two years of intensive consultation, the flexibility shown by the delegation of China relating to document CD/1624 shows that the text is worth preserving. It shows that the Conference has a real opportunity to perform a task which everyone expects it to perform, namely, to relaunch its work on the basis of a balanced programme of work, one which would have the advantage of preserving the most widely different security-related interests expressed in this forum. The delegation of Brazil invites all delegations present here to pursue their efforts in that same direction.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the distinguished representative of Brazil for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I have no other speakers on my list and I see no other delegations wishing to take the floor today. In that case, I shall take the floor myself.

Mr. Secretary-General, dear colleagues,

After four weeks, the French presidency of the Conference on Disarmament is effectively coming to an end today, even if theoretically it will only end on Sunday. 23 June, at midnight. In accordance with a well-established tradition, it is my duty to make a review, which I hope will be as objective as possible, both from the viewpoint of methodology and from that of results. I will then give you some of my general thoughts about our activities and the context in which they have been taking place.

First of all, I would like to talk about our methodology. It has not been very original; I have given preference to bilateral consultations. In this way, I have met 46 delegations out of the 65 - or 66, counting ourselves - represented at our Conference. The others, because of lack of time or perhaps lack of interest, did not come to see me but I was open to everyone. I was also able to meet the groups or their coordinators, either by specific appointment or during the many meetings which make up the social life of our club, whose reputation is already well established. Finally, I have tried to make the presidential consultations as lively and interactive as possible and I hope, in all modesty, that I have achieved this goal.

I shall now move on from methodology to the results. This will come as no surprise to anyone: my consultations did not reveal any path, broad or narrow, capable of leading the Conference on Disarmament out of its impasse, even if now and then there was a faint glimmer of light in the darkness. I tried not to raise any excessive hopes during my three earlier statements. From the very outset, I spoke about modesty, and I will speak again about modesty at the end.

Learning from the experience of my predecessors, I have worked in two complementary fashions. First, I considered the option of exchanges of views or dialogue. I believed that this was the lowest common denominator which would help bring us together, to transcend our differences and break the vicious circle of inertia. I must confess that I failed, even if this was only a relative failure. Nothing worked and yet, as I am sure you are aware, your ideas and your suggestions made it possible to explore all the possible avenues for such a dialogue, even the most modest among them. This is the fourth time that I have used the word "modest" in this statement. Some of us are not always able to keep to this approach. At this stage, I must nonetheless thank our three special coordinators on procedural questions for their dedication to their delicate undertaking. They have proved that, in certain conditions, a measure of dialogue, even if it is limited, is still nonetheless possible.

(The President)

Second, the other option which I followed was the main path of the programme of work or specific elements of the programme of work, in respect of which we now have our common heritage, built up with great courage and perspicacity by my predecessors. This too has led to stalemate, albeit a relative stalemate. This approach, which consists in agreeing on the lowest common denominator, evolved to such an extent during our meetings that the Ambassador of Algeria proposed as a formula the product of the divisors. All the same, at the end of my presidency, I believe I detect some movement, a slight shifting. I would like to express the hope that this might be the harbinger of a long-desired spring after an endless winter. Perhaps the spirit of Moscow will prevail one day, I hope not too far off, in this Council Chamber.

And, lastly, some thoughts on the global context. Taken in its broadest sense, the notion of arms control or disarmament, as conceived in the throes of the cold war and implemented over the last three decades, is now merely marking time. Disarmament and non-proliferation, which had formed the keystone of this concept, are now being eroded. Changes are affecting today both bilateral and multilateral disarmament and the paralysis which has taken hold of the Conference on Disarmament is one of the most tangible signs of this process. We must ask ourselves, now and in the future, whether the world has perhaps gone out of the reach of any traditional approach and suddenly slipped beyond arms control. During his statement in the plenary last week, the Ambassador of Morocco stated quite rightly that a new page in the history of disarmament had been written on 14 May in Moscow with the signing of a new disarmament treaty. This treaty, said the Ambassador, marks a true break with the traditional approach to arms control. Whether it is a break for better or for worse - and this is my question, not the Ambassador's - will be impossible to decide today. History will tell.

A French diplomat who was also Minister for Foreign Affairs in the period between the two world wars gives the following account of the work of the Conference on Disarmament in the 1930s in his memoir, "Quai d'Orsay in the Three Republics": "And in this sumptuous palace in Geneva there were only actors left, engaged in frantic manoeuvres, afraid as they were that their theatre would close down. They were forever hatching complicated and subtle intrigues that led nowhere." Let us pay careful heed: unless it is saved by a sudden resumption of activity, the day might come when this theatre closes its doors, whether for good or not. We would have nothing to gain thereby and probably everything to lose. Let us endeavour, as we prepare to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the first Conference on Disarmament, to learn the lessons of the past.

I would like to convey my very best wishes for success to the Ambassador of Germany, Volker Heinsberg, who will be replacing me with effect from next week in the seat that I occupy now. In the name of French-German friendship, which is stronger than ever, I hope that, in the absence of anything else, all the lessons and views gathered by the French presidency will also be useful to the German presidency. I offer him my wishes for success and, should he need it, my own full cooperation and that of my mission.

(The President)

Finally, I would like to thank all those who enable our Conference to work efficiently and in such a good atmosphere under the leadership of our Secretary-General, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, and our Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey. Their assistance and that of their staff have been invaluable. I would also like to make special mention, even though we may not be at the Cannes cinema festival, of all our interpreters: I thank them on your behalf for the sterling work that they do so discreetly, behind the scenes, bringing us together when everything separates us, translating what is untranslatable, making clear things which are not always so clear, and walking side by side with us on our long march.

To quote the words of the French poet Lamartine, "Man is like a tree that you must shake for the fruit to fall out". I earnestly hope that my successors and, first and foremost, the Ambassador of Germany, will be able to shake the Conference on Disarmament tree harder than I have.

On the face of it, that concludes our work for today. I ask once again: does any delegation wish to take the floor? As I do not see any, I will conclude by saying that the next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Thursday, 27 June 2002, at 10 a.m., under the presidency of Germany.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.